

A THEOLOGY TOWARDS AWARENESS :

**The Evil Aspect of
Christian Platonic Theology**

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TOWARDS A 20th CENTURY THEOLOGY OF HUMAN NATURE

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PREFACE

When I first thought of the theological perspective I am proposing, I called it "a personal theology". But when I read McClendon's, Biography as Theology¹, it became clear I was not only talking about personal faith and response. My title seemed to emphasize the personal aspect too much. Then, I thought of changing it to "experimental theology". But, that seemed too impersonal and did not imply the God-centeredness I intended. Richard Niebuhr's, Experimental Theology², used the term to talk about faith as a person acted it out, leaving an emphasis on the ethical side. But what I was talking about was both of these aspects and, also, how a person gets to being a faithful person, i.e. a God-centered person. I finally decided on a Theology Towards Awareness, because I perceived that there was some aspect of theology in Christian history which made it difficult to become a faithful person in the community of faith. This aspect needed to be brought into awareness.

It became obvious to me as I wrote that there was a need to reflect theologically on why human thinking, feeling and action do not function together, in concert, while a person is in the process of becoming faithful. Is a person's disintegratedness

¹ James Wm. McClendon, Jr., Biography as Theology, (Abingdon Press, New York: 1974).

² Richard R. Niebuhr, Experimental Religion, (Harper & Row, New York: 1972).

the cause of unfaithfulness or is it only one of the factors which inhibits faithfulness? People have always been aware of thinking, feeling, good and bad behaviour but the need for them to function integratedly has not been a conscious, predominant concern for the Christian culture, until recently. What I am talking about is the need for theological reflection on the issues raised by psychology about the split between thinking, feeling and action in relation to theology about God, human embodiment, sin and redemption.

The hypothesis of this thesis suggests a partial answer to the question of disintegratedness. The disintegratedness of people's psychic functions exacerbates their difficulties in becoming faithful. The disintegratedness has been encouraged by the orthodox theological view of human nature. The disintegration was not created by the theological view but the theological view changed the disintegration of the human psyche into a schizophrenia which is only beginning to be addressed today. The theological view of human nature has shown an ambivalent attitude towards human embodiment, particularly in its attitude towards human sexuality and human emotions. The ambivalence occurred through the attempt to synthesize the Platonic view of human nature with the Hebraic view. The synthesis of the inherently immiscible thought forms drew in the evil aspects of the philosophical way of thinking. Because these evil aspects were not as well known as the Hebraic evils, they were not immediately perceived but instead became accepted parts of Christian culture.

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The evil aspects of the theology emerged because the philosophers and theologians were ambivalent about how sin and human embodiment were related, and because the theological conclusions of the 4th century were not universally applicable to all times and to all places. That theology is in part particular to its historical milieu. The evil and the good aspects are the moments of the paradox inherent in any thinking or product of thought. At first the evil aspect was rather benign. Later, after Augustine, when the orthodox views became accepted, the unawareness of the ambivalent attitude towards human nature caused the evil aspect to begin to emerge and begin the repression of feelings and the disintegration of thinking and action. The ambivalent attitude towards human nature was inherited from the orthodoxy concretized in the Trinitarian controversy by the Cappadocians and was passed on to future generations through Augustine's modifications. In this sense the seeds of the schizophrenia between thinking and feeling and thinking and action were sown by the Cappadocians.

For me, awareness is the making conscious parts of our unconscious which motivate our behaviour and either inhibit us or

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I have purposely used the term "evil" for two reasons. (1) It makes evil less frightening and makes it less likely to be pushed out of human awareness. It becomes more possible to see good and evil as a tension. People can choose the good and avoid the evil, not define it away or ignore it. (2) Some aspects of the thought process are seen for what they are, i.e. evil. The evil present in some idealistic metaphysics of human nature and society lead to oppression of some groups, because the valuation inherent in the thought process was not brought to awareness.

assist us in growing to become Children of God. This idea is influenced by therapeutic depth psychologies like those of Jung and Freud. These psychologies are in the process of trying to assist people who wish to, to become aware of how various parts of people inhibit them from behaving as they would like to, or to achieve the goals they set for themselves. These psychologies are dealing with their perception of how the human psyche is not integrated. Individuals are often unaware that what they are feeling about people is different from how they behave towards them. It has become such a well known phenomenon that someone has developed the term "metalanguage", i.e. the language of action which is either consonant or dissonant with what a person is saying. For example, if John says "I love you, Mary", while he is banging her against a wall in order to convince her of his love, John's action is not "exactly" what he is saying with his words. The phenomenon occurs frequently because what people think and what they do are different. That is to say that the fundamental theme in this thesis is the theological reflection on issues of human growth and development, in relation to the schizophrenia of thought, feeling and action.

These issues raise questions about how individuals or groups deal with themselves as they are and yet become what they want to be, i.e. acting like Children of God? I assume that question to imply that there are both good and bad aspects to people which they must become aware of. They are the parts in the unconscious which

motivate or compel people to behave as they do and are somewhat out of conscious control. The awareness is needed in order that each person can grow in the ability to love. It is often the unconscious aspects of people which inhibit them from being more loving and from being more creative or productive. That is to say that there are good and bad aspects of people which they are unaware of. This perspective is heavily influenced by Jungian psychology.

What has all this got to do with Theology? The emphasis⁴ above appears to be on individual personal growth. The theological concern is how has the Christian cultural expression of theology exacerbated the non-integrated way thinking, feeling and action function in 20th century people? What are the positive and negative attitudes towards human embodiment theologically? What is the Christian community's response to the awareness of the problem?

In this century we are facing a similar kind of dialogue with psychology as the Christian community did with Greek philosophy in the 4th century. The first stage of the dialogue was in the 40's and 50's when there was a flurry of interest in the psychology of religion. Books by David Roberts, Wayne Oates and

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The individual growth as it is stated here may be the purview of psychology. However, I only say "may" because I would not want to make that process of growth only a responsibility of the psychologist. It should be the theologian's responsibility as well.

Gordon Allport dealt with this concern because Freud had confronted the Christian community. This dialogue became more a psychologizing of theology than a synthesis of the two. The psychological side dominated. We seem to be in a second stage of that dialogue which is a theological reflection on the issues psychology has raised about human nature and sin and how the Christian concept of human nature has been involved in the path towards the oppression of people like Blacks, Women, Gay people, the Third World.

Today's dialogue is not totally unrelated to the philosophical dialogue of the 4th century. I believe we are dealing with some of the effects of the orthodox view of embodiment which was made orthodox in that period, as I mentioned in the statement of the hypothesis above. There needs to be an identification of the relationship of today's issues with the history of the Christian doctrine of human nature and a synthesis with some aspects of psychology in order to answer the questions people are asking about how to become better people. All the people who are asking these questions are not Christians but they are no less sincere and striving to be completely human than the Christians are. In order to answer the questions raised by these people there needs to be a dialogue with various psychologies of the day in order to determine both the good and the evil aspects of these psychologies in relation to the Gospel, dealing with these aspects in terms of God, human embodiment, sin and redemption.

What I am going to do in this thesis is raise some questions and make a sketch of the process by which thinking, feeling and action became separated from each other. I say raise questions because many of the questions which emerge I cannot answer here. I say a sketch because I am not attempting to make any definitive analysis of all Christian history but only to point out the hints of the historical development which I perceive, through the authorities in the various historical and theological areas. First of all, I will start with my own story in order to point out the presuppositions I bring to this issue and expose my bias and perspective. Secondly, I will do an historical analysis of the origins of the embodiment issue as exemplified by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine. The last section will be a suggestion of a theological method which would attempt to produce a more universal concept of human nature in relation to God, embodiment, sin and redemption. The particular emphasis of this method will be to assist people to become faithful through their interactions in the Christian community they belong to.

My intention is not to be exhaustive, nor completely definitive. I conceive this thesis as an exposition of the hypothesis I mentioned above. I do not intend to argue each issue of this hypothesis, definitively. Because of the limitations of time and energy, I cannot deal with all arguments against the hypothesis. The thesis could be seen as a summary record of all the conversations I have

had concerning sexuality and theology over the last four years. I am simply trying to develop an interpretation of history as it relates to the present and make some suggestions for the future.

My intention has been to construct the interpretation of history under guidance and without viewing history anachronistically. In some places the interpretation is correct but in other places it is wrong. I do not perceive this error to mean that what I say is totally fallacious, but only that I have not been able to say what I wanted to say. I do not have the time to work out all the problems my friendly critics have raised. Beside the unclear language, I have found it difficult to find the appropriate language to express the paradoxical relationships I am describing. I am still searching for a language form which will be true to the facts and true to the paradoxical relationship I perceive. But as my conclusions suggest, I wonder if philosophical categories of space based on sight really will convey to others what I perceive to be true. What I need to learn to do is distinguish between my errors in thinking, my unclear language and the difficulties in conveying the paradoxical relationship I perceive.

What I am trying to convey will not be understood very well at all unless the reader accepts paradox as real. The whole hypothesis presupposes it. The best example of this presupposition is⁵ "Today's virtues are tomorrow's sins" . Putting that saying in

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If this concept is not understood what I say becomes very often irrational.

terms of the hypothesis: the Cappadocian expression of the Gospel in Platonic terms was good for its day; in later generations the evil aspect of the ambivalent attitude towards embodiment present in Cappadocian theology surfaced, because people were unaware of the evil aspect being present. Gregory of Nyssa did not view embodiment as bad or evil nor did he lead his life as though he did not like his body or sensory perception. His theology was ambivalent towards embodiment because he put a negative valuation on sexuality and the expression of anger. This view was passed on to later generations with some modifications but the negative valuation of emotions was never eradicated in future Christian cultures. When later generations viewed the tradition as it was present in their own culture, the negative valuation of the emotions became the source for viewing the emotions as bad, in and of themselves, not only as forces in need of being checked. The human feelings were repressed because it was believed good people did not have them. Eventually all sensual pleasure became unacceptable as a source of joy, until Petrarch walked up Mt. Ventoux and enjoyed the view, in the 14th century*.

A second way the "virtues" of Cappadocian theology became later sins is through the evil aspect of "doing" philosophy, i.e. the tendency, albeit only a tendency, for the philosophical enterprise to lead some people to make knowledge an end in and of itself, rather than responding to what that knowledge is trying to convey, i.e. being loving to others. There is an evil aspect in each of

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p. 62., UDB.

our human faculties which can lead us to sin if we let that faculty dominate our lives. There are evil aspects for both Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion. The evil aspect for Hebrew thought was legalism and phariseeism. The evil aspect for Greek philosophy is rationalism and elitism. There were good aspects as well. However, the good aspects have been overemphasized throughout Christian history, so I will not mention them much in this paper.

The reason I have been so tenacious about the issues I raise is because I believe they are the crucial issues of the day. I have had to take the risk of being stupid and irrational because what I am attempting to work out will affect my ministry. The issues are admittedly personal ones but they are also cultural ones. I have attempted to expunge my personal prejudices and anachronistic perspective on history as much as possible. At times I have been successful, at others not so successful.

The thesis is an attempt to put together seemingly conflicting ideas. So I must apologize for not being as successful as I had hoped I would be. The exercise has been tremendously successful for me even though it may not achieve high academic excellence. I thank all the people who have been willing to struggle with me through the confusion. They were even willing to expend great amounts of energy through getting angry. I hope the discussions were as helpful to others as they were to me. The discussions allowed me to clarify much of what I have written. I thank Dan Fee for being

willing to rage through many discussions. I thank all those who have been willing to let me talk on and on about the thesis. I thank Professors Patterson, Stevick and Thomas for their patience, their direction and above all for their encouragement when I was floundering. I thank the class in Early Christian Platonism for their willingness to argue through a very heated discussion. I did not convince them I was right but they did not convince me I was wrong. They did convince me I had not found the way to convey what I am saying. In fact, their response seemed to justify what I was saying. The problem was that we did not find the language to say what both of us were claiming. However, we did create what I consider the essence of the theological process - dialogue with conviction. At least the issues I am raising must be important - people are getting angry about what I say.

THE HISTORY OF THE THESIS

The whole thesis is based on my theological reflection on my own history. Consequently, in order to understand some parts of the thesis it will be helpful to tell some of the story behind it. This history will indicate what some of my presuppositions are and why I started the whole venture in the first place. I have certain biases which need to be aired so the reader knows what they are and so I keep myself honest. I have to ask myself if my conclusions are made to satisfy my own purposes or are they perceptions of reality? Or should I say, what part of my conclusions are made for my own purposes and what part is a perception of objective reality and of the truth? My conclusions, like many other people's conclusions, are a bit of both.

Because I know my own biases I concluded that in order to understand the theology of theologians, it is crucial to understand their biases. Therefore, as is true for myself, I concluded that the historical facts about the theologians were as important as the writings themselves. From these facts students can attempt to determine what the dialogue was within the person as it related to his written theology and to suggest what the theologian's dialogue was with the cultural milieu of the time.

In this section, I will sketch some pertinent details about the process to writing the thesis and include some biographical details. I hope the reader does not consider this section just

background for the later sections. I think of this historical information as being in tension with the reflections I made on my own experience.

The first question which can be asked is, why have I attempted to do such an horrendously broad thesis? That is a good question. I have often asked it of myself. After I have stopped telling myself how crazy I am, I usually come back to a central theme, i.e. I need to understand how some of the problems I have had to face are related to the Judeo-Christian theological and cultural tradition. I have often made ascertains rapidly without really knowing whether I was right or not. Therefore, I feel compelled to find out what the truth is. The other possible conclusion of keeping my mouth shut is much too taxing on my psyche. It is also important to know if I am right or wrong because much of my ministry will be dealing with the issues I am raising.

What I am trying to do is make sense out of my own problems and how the Church and society have participated in creating them. I am trying to distinguish between what actually happened in history and my interpretation of those events because of the problems I have had. I am not trying to blame the Church for all the problems I have, but I am trying to determine how much the Christian theological and cultural history participated in the problems I face and the problems all people who are involved in human liberation face. Therefore, the conclusions I make are not only for my own issues but for the issues many people face. My conclusions will dramatically effect what I do.

Personally, I am caught in a kind of a paradox. My life has been an experience with paradox. On the one hand some of my problems have been caused by the traditional attitude of the Church towards homosexuality. But, on the other hand, the Church has become the source of the means to resolve both my personal problems and my problems with my homosexual orientation. The Church has been both/and more. It has been both the source of many of my problems and also the source of the way to a reconciliation within myself. And more than that, the Church has opened the doors for me to experience a sense of what salvation means, today. I am indebted to the people who were my experience of the Body of Christ, i.e. the Church, for my salvation but at the same time I see the history of the Christian community supporting the attitude which has inhibited me from gaining a sense of salvation and self-worth before I did.

The question I ask when I view Christian history is, where is the need for reform and what reform should it be? In my mind, there is certainly something wrong with Christian intellectuals of the past, if, with all the power of God and the Logos at their disposal, the source for resolving many personal problems of living in the 20th century came from a non-Christian and a person who was anti-religious at that . There must be some connection between the problems we face today and Christian intellectual history, if an important way to assist people to solve their problems came from outside the intellectual community of the Church. It is even tempting

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Sigmund Freud.

to look back over Christian history and see how all the Churches succeeded in being on the wrong side of the human liberation issues, until recently. Unfortunately, it does not seem clear where the problem arose, however it is certain there was a problem.

It is my reflection on this view of my own history which has led me to make the hypothesis of this thesis. Unfortunately, the thesis has only turned out to be a statement of the problem rather than any conclusions. But what I have tried to do is ask myself whether my convictions and personal interests are affecting how I am making my conclusions, i.e. making me pick and choose data which supports my hypothesis, rather than being a complete perception of history.

The main reason I am saying all this is to demonstrate how I think about the issues I am concerned about. It will be easier to understand and evaluate the conclusions I make if how I think about the issues and what my concern is for them, is made explicit.

One of the other problems I had to work through was anger. I had been told by many that I was an angry person and did not express the anger I felt. I always denied it. But then, I was also very prone to depression and anxiety too. As it turned out, the depression and the unexpressed anger were related. It was an experience which unbottled my rage and the therapy I had to go through in order to cope with that rage, which taught me why I got depressed and anxious.

The experience I mention occurred at a lecture by James Cone, a Black theologian. He was talking about the internalized rage which Black people live with because they have accepted the view of Black people which society projects. After the lecture, Diane Tickle, a fellow student who was sitting beside me, said that it seemed to her that what Dr. Cone was saying was very similar to my situation. I said, "Why, of course!!" And, from that moment on, I felt a rush of rage which lasted for four months; I probably averaged 4 hours of sleep a night. Her pointing out the correspondence of my experience with the Black experience immediately released the bottled-up rage in me. Since that time I have often seen in my mind the image of an endlessly thick brick wall being broken through from within. Not only was my rage released, my creativity was as well. It was in this four month period I began to see the connection between my sexuality problems, psychology and theology. I discovered I had to go into therapy at the end of the four months of raging because I was so exhausted that I became extremely depressed and anxious again. The depression reaction was also due to the unresolved issues between my father and I over being unable to get angry with him for fear of his rejection. I finally accepted the fact that my rage and anger were due to being unable to be free to express anger outwardly because of the kind of relationship I had with my father and because I had accepted the view of myself which society projects onto the homosexual person as a scapegoating for their own difficulties in dealing with their own feelings.

The therapy which helped me deal with my anger was only the most recent experience. I had gone through therapy at various times for the same kind of reasons since 1960, i.e. extreme anxiety and depression. But that was only one of the sources of help which was made available to me, to assist me in coping with life. The other profoundly successful experience was the disciplined prayer life I have led over the last 15 years. The most memorable experiences during these years happened during a meditation. For the first time, I was relieved of the sense of absolute isolation from other people, I, finally, felt I was loved and a part of this world as I had seldom felt until that day. That day was a water-shed experience which has led, although ever so painfully slowly, towards a sense of connectedness and affection from people, even if they are not around. The prayer and the Christian community I lived in made real what the Gospel promised. And, on top of that, I learned that what I needed would come to me. What I needed to do was keep true to the vision I was given.

I had started the prayer life in reflection on a talk from an Episcopal Benedictine in 1961. In response to the reflection I went for advice to the Society of St. John the Evangelist. Later I spent a year as a novice in that society. Therefore, my prayer life is heavily influenced by the spirituality of the society which is Ignatian, and by the whole Anglo-Catholic tradition on meditation as a part of rules of life.

In the last five years I began to realize that both my prayer life and my therapy experience were crucial to my life because they helped me to cope with what had happened to me. But, I felt a sense of disintegratedness between these two separate kinds of experiences. I felt caught between the two experiences because some of my friends could identify with my psychological experience and some with my prayer experience. There were few who could identify with both. I began to ask myself why these two experiences could not fit together? Do people have to go to therapy to grow personally and to the Church to grow spiritually? Doesn't that kind of situation create a schizophrenia in the human spirit? How can growing as a person and being transformed to be a Child of God become more integrated?

Because I was in a course on psychology and religion and the professor was a devotee of Jung, I began to read him. The more I did the more I realized that Jung talked as much, if not more than most theologians did, about God, Jesus Christ, sin and redemption as if he knew God. In fact, in an interview Jung answered the question, "Do you believe in God?", by saying, "No. I don't believe I know!"⁶ Jung provided me with the integration I was searching for. He described the psychological transformation of a person in relationship to God, human embodiment, sin and redemption.

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B.B.C. Black/White film on the life of Carl Jung.

What makes me angry still is the fact that I found the source of the synthesis I needed through a reactionary Christian instead of with the Christian theological community. That fact also caused me to look for the problems in the Christian intellectual community. I ask why Jung was not a Christian theologian and a part of the Church, instead of being its prophet from the outside?

Some of my questions are about my own particular problems. However, I do believe there is a real sense of disintegratedness between depth psychology therapies and theology. There is not as complete a resolution of the conflict between psychology and theology as there is between science and theology. There are significant questions yet to be answered about the relationship of lust, sexual behaviour, growth towards perfection and growth towards integration. There is no well worked out theory about human nature and how to live in it as a Child of God with the insights psychology has provided.

Much of the reflection about the connection of sexuality and theology of human embodiment began in response to one of the

⁷ From a personal interview in September, 1974, in Zurich with Aniela Jaffe, I found that Carl Jung did not become a confessing Christian until late in his life. Some Jungian therapists even deny he was ever a Christian.

most significant insights into the meaning of the Word of God I have ever had. I was looking for something about the image of God for a course and looked up Genesis 1: 26. When I read it I felt my head burst with amazement. I immediately understood that the image of God was expressed in our maleness and femaleness, not only our soul. Sexuality was not outside the goodness of creation, which had been my impression until then. In that one experience⁸ was contained all that I have since learned. Since then, I have read many things which have verified what I saw so clearly at that time. When reading Jung I often was amazed that I had already concluded what he was saying. I am still unraveling that experience.

The first product of the insight was a paper on "Sexuality and the Imago Dei: God and Man as Relationship", for the Introduction to Theology course in 1972. The next product was a 67 page paper for four courses on "Sexuality as the Symbol of the Old and New Testament". That paper had a psychology and theology theme. This thesis is actually a step back from dealing with the issues of sexuality per se, to dealing with issues of theology in respect to human nature. My purpose is to determine the credibility of using personal reflections on one's own faith-experience (i) for writing theology and (ii) for making interpretations of theological history from a psychological point of view. I hope I can discover the limits of personal reflection and overcome personal bias through

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A paraphrase of Heirich Ott, from Poetry of Interpretation

guided study. I will want to learn how to distinguish between insights which have particular importance to me, alone, or to any one person, and those insights which have more universal application.

For me the insights I gained about Genesis 1: 26 have been very significant. Almost instantly, the insight began to give me the ability to look more positively at myself. It provided me with the opportunity to be creative in ways I had been unable to be previously. It also started me on the way to resolving the problems I have had with being productive. I was usually paralyzed from doing what I wanted to academically. With this insight I had something inside me begging to be shut up. It kept gnawing on my mind enough to motivate me beyond the paralysis. What concerns me still is: Are the results of this process of insight and what it has done for me, just for me, or can it be helpful for others, at least in some form?

The one sure presupposition is that my own issues are involved in the work I am producing. In the past, admitting to such a bias would have automatically eliminated the credibility of the work. I can wonder what that attitude did for the credibility of academic work anyway. I would suspect people simply hid their personal involvement in their work. I suspect it led to a kind of unawareness which prevented people from seeing how personal issues were influencing what a person concluded. Fortunately, today, people like Walter Wind and Martin Thornton are decrying such objectivism.

INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Many thinkers have been aware of the disintegration between human thinking, feeling and action. Carl Jung constantly refers to this disintegration throughout his works and conceives the integration of thinking and feeling faculties as part of the goal of his analytical psychology, i.e. individuation. H. Marshall McLuhan says, "literate man, when we meet him in the Greek world, is a split man, a schizophrenic, as all literate men have been since the invention of the phonetic alphabet"⁹. Rollo May speaks of the schizoid person as one who is "out of touch; avoiding close relationships; the inability to feel. I do not use the term as a reference to psychopathology, but rather as a general condition of our culture and the tendencies of people which make it up"¹⁰. These men are only a very small fraction of the people who speak about the disintegration. Most therapies based on depth psychology theory are attempting to overcome the same disintegration.

I am using the term schizophrenia throughout the thesis for the disintegration in the human psyche and behaviour. Like Rollo May, I am not using schizophrenia in the psychopathological sense but as an appropriate term to describe the way people use their thinking and feeling faculties in relation to their behaviour. Most

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p. 22., HML.

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p. 16., RMa.

people do not use their faculties integratedly, as I mentioned above where I defined awareness, (page 3).

The historical analysis section to follow is an attempt to point out the relationship between the orthodox Christian theological resolution of the Trinitarian controversy and the development of the schizophrenia in the culture after Augustine and before Petrarch's ascent of Mt. Ventoux. I claim that people did have a schizophrenia between thought and action, as Marshal McLuhan says in the above quotation; disintegration of human faculties is a given at birth; it is neither a good thing nor a bad thing; the Jews certainly were very negative towards things related to sexuality, as the Levite Code makes clear in the section on the distinctions between clean and unclean, particularly in Leviticus 15. But, the Cappadocians and many Christians did not exhibit this schizophrenia in the same form as it exists today. The unawareness of feelings was exacerbated by the Christian culture. The Cappadocians and the Early Christians were very much aware of the need to respond to what they thought about the Gospel. What happened in the period after Augustine is that the ambivalence of orthodox theology towards the goodness of sexuality and human emotions was encultured. People chose to consider these feelings bad in themselves rather than seeing how the feelings only participated in sin. The valuing of the feelings themselves as sin was more the way the later generations viewed the Cappadocian view. The seeds of the later disintegration can be said to have been sown in the Cappadocian theology because

they were ambivalent towards the passions, as passions: the way they considered the passions made them more than simply inhibitors to contemplation. The negative valuation became seen as ordained by God, or that human emotions caused sin.

It began to be believed that we were not here to enjoy this world but as a purgatory in preparation for the next. Therefore, to enjoy any part of the world or our bodies became suspected of causing sin by its very expression instead of being considered a potential source of sin. However, on the other hand, the awareness of the evils involved in the thinking processes were not emphasized quite so much. It is true at various times there were warnings about the misuse of philosophy and learning but these warnings were not heeded as much as the admonitions against human emotions. Human emotions became negatively treated and thought processes became positively treated. The evil aspects of the thought processes were down-played. Consequently, those who were thinkers and involved in contemplation became seen as better than other people. The upper classes who were the ones usually who had the leisure to get educated were gradually thought to be better than everyone else, like the monks and nuns were. Part of the reason this kind of culture developed is that the original experience like the Cappadocians had, was lost at times. In order to maintain the Church, people tended to divinize the past, particularly the orthodox theology, instead of being faithful themselves. The experience of being faithful was replaced by ethics: as Beach and Niebuhr say,

"the Church codified the Christian ethic. For any group in danger of losing its original ethical inspiration, legalism becomes the strategy for preservation ... the followers of a reformer try to keep alive their acquired faith by setting forth specific requirements whose fulfillment will lead to the possession of the faith"¹¹. This description is very close to what Jesus criticized the pharisees for. In Jewry, the law had become an end in itself.

However, the Greek Fathers did not indiscriminately embrace Greek philosophy. They did not start out to synthesize Christianity with Greek philosophy. From Justin Martyr on, it was realized that there were some ideas of Greek philosophy which were not compatible with the Gospel. Irenaeus went so far as to consider it the enemy. But, all the Fathers used Greek philosophical ideas. However, they selected the ideas which seemed to be consistent with the Gospel.

Neither were the Fathers attempting to build systems of philosophical theology like some post-Reformation theologians. They were fighting against alien forces and ideas in their culture under a great deal of pressure. They had little time to think out all the implications of their thought. They were bound by the cultural milieu they lived in. They could not be expected to answer questions later ages asked. "Their theology was a theology

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p. 51-2., B & N.

in the specific sense. (It) sought to develop the implications of Christian belief in the particular circumstances created by the existence of Greek thought"¹². Therefore, the Fathers cannot be used to answer all the implications of their thought for their time or for our time. They must be understood in their own milieu.

The spread of the Gospel had to face the challenge of philosophy because it was a dominant factor of the Greek culture. The whole culture was dealing with issues raised by the philosophical schools. It was not a concern of some small insignificant group, ensconced in some ivory tower. It was the concern of the market place, the place where most of the philosophizing went on. It was by no means a simple intellectual enterprise. Philosophy was to the Greek culture what the prophetic tradition was to the Hebraic.

Because Greek philosophy was not only an intellectualization of issues, it is an understatement to say, "the interpretation of the Gospel in Hellenistic terms was a necessity if the Church was to move out of a narrow Palestinian Jewish milieu, since this is the only way the Gospel could ever be understood, affirmed and communicated in the Hellenistic world"¹³. It is true that the missionary spread of the Gospel would have been inhibited if philosophy had not been accepted, intellectually. However, the intellect-

¹²

p. 159-160., LGP.

¹³

p. 49., OCT.

ual aspect is not the most important thing. What is more important is that the two cultures, the Greek and the Hebrew, were expressions of human nature which had to be integrated in order for the human race to discover its fullest expression and to be able to cope with the increasing complexities of the burgeoning human race. The eventual conflation of the two cultures provided the cultural basis for an expression of the Gospel, which was not possible in each separately. The conflation created a cultural movement for a whole society both religiously and intellectually, effecting human behaviour as well as human thought. The result was that everyday human problems were resolved, not only intellectual ones. People were enabled to deal with themselves and the questions of their milieu and relate them to God, themselves, each other and creation. The questions they were asking looked like simple intellectual ones, but they were questions of how does the community relate to its present problems of survival in a hostile world and how does it relate to the incarnate Lord and the God and Father of All. The Greek Platonists had succeeded in creating a true mysticism which affected people personally and culturally as well as intellectually.

The Gospel was in dialogue with the culture. The dialogue was an attempt by Christians to establish contact with Greek philosophy and to preach the Gospel. It was occasional and dialogical; the apologetic enterprise was not the dominant theme for

the Christians in the Christian meetings. Theology was seen in its true light as a dialogue, not as pronouncements of truth in definitive form. The Councils were called only to settle battles in order to eliminate confusion and to stop the political expressions of the theological controversies. The power struggles were expressions of the theological convictions not simply desires for power. "It was a new dialogical theology because the conversation of the previous two centuries was with the Hebraic world. The Church was learning a new form of dialogue"¹⁴ .

There was even interaction of the Christian thinkers and the Greek philosophical schools. The theologians helped resolve some of the questions being discussed in the philosophical schools. In addition, Christian statements began to affect the schools because some of the disciples of Plotinus and Celsus wrote apologies against the Church, similarly as the theologians had against Greek philosophy.

However, the dialogue created problems as well as solutions. According to the Norris-Patterson dictum, the Greek Fathers answered questions of philosophy through the apologetic conversation but raised questions for themselves and future generations to solve¹⁵ . An example of this dictum can be seen by a hypothetical conversation between Justin and Middle Platonism: "I can say something in the

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Ch1 2-6-75.

¹⁵

Ch1 2-6-75.

debate between Albinus and Atticus. The God who is revealed is the 'sole-uncreated'. We know what the oversoul is. The soul is the only unbecoming. It is God's Word, the Logos, which is manifest in Christ." The connection between philosophy and the Gospel was begun but it left the following generations to deal with God as the 'sole-uncreated'. The Cappadocians found it incompatible with the Gospel and replaced it with the incomprehens-
 16
 ibility doctrine from Philo, Plato and Irenaeus .

What this dictum indicates is that the Cappadocian resolution to the Trinitarian controversy produced both good and bad effects. That means there was both truth and error in that orthodox tradition. The resolution affected the culture and the thinking of Christians both negatively and positively. Evil and the potentiality for sin as much as goodness, was encased in the theology produced by the dialogue. The evil aspect of the thought was hidden in the writings.

The positive effect of the dictum was to create a culture which lived in the transcendental aspect of God. This effect was the dominant theme in the culture. The major cultural movement of this aspect was monasticism. However, there was a negative or evil aspect to living in the transcendental aspect of God. The evil aspect was that the laity and clergy developed an attitude which directed their views to prayer and out of the historical praxis.

This development was not true always. It only happened at times. The monastic movement was very much involved in the needs of society. For example, for a period before St. Francis of Assisi when the religious life was so highly revered, the monastic movement had become corrupt because it was so wealthy. The monks and clerics ignored the needs of the people. The Franciscan movement addressed these needs and reformed the Church for a time but by the century before the Reformation the evil aspect of the transcend-
17
ence of God had risen again .

The other major negative result in culture came from the Cappadocians' identification of sin with one aspect of human nature, namely, the passions or emotions, rather than seeing all aspects as having good and evil potentiality. This identification came from Platonic philosophy. The result in culture came from the gradual acceptance of the theology which contained the Platonic suppositions.

"It arbitrarily imposed certain assumptions on its followers, such as the primacy of intellection over perception, the superiority of rational-spiritual over emotional-physical experience, and the identification of the former with the divine and the latter with debased aspects of the cosmos ... For many, Greek culture was the clue to social and economic advancement with hope that some divine quality of human nature would survive the apparently meaningless round of daily existence."
18

Therefore, it is clear that the Platonic philosophy maintained a

17

This example is not implying that the evil effect is caused by the Cappadocian resolution. The evil aspect is a given. It emerges when the transcendent aspect of God is overemphasized.

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p. 16-17., LGP.

presupposition which was alien to the Gospel, but the Cappadocians did not recognize it when they tried to express the Gospel in Platonic terms. Consequently, through the Cappadocian resolution, the Christian culture was given the potential to set up the contemplative vocation as higher than the active, academic pursuits over practical, thinking and feeling faculties and thought and contemplation over action. The chain of being became value-laden with the good at the top and the evil on the bottom. The neutral spatial concepts of up and down became value-laden, i.e. good was up and evil was down. Plato's cosmology became encultured in ways he did not intend but in ways which could be implied from the attitudes he had towards the structure of reality. The perceptible world became downgraded and gradually more and more a prison rather than fullness of life, as the Cappadocians meant. This enculturation occurred because the evil aspects of the thought emerged when the thought left the cultural milieu on which it was dependent, for a proper balance of the good and evil aspects.

I am making this point so strongly because my major theme is to show how the orthodox theological enterprise has affected human life both to its benefit and its detriment. I am claiming that theological writings, by nature, have both good and evil aspects. Therefore, when these ideas are incorporated in a culture, the good and evil aspects are bound to surface. They surface partly because people are involved in the process and partly because knowledge is always finite and particular. The evil does not only come from

people's sin. The evil emerges as the good aspect is over-emphasized. Consequently, sin becomes acting out that evil aspect and accepting it as being equally as good as the good aspect.

Secondly, theology is culturally and historically bound and dependent. When people use the theology in another context it will not totally fit. Neither the Church nor theologians can make pronouncements which are absolutely true and good for all times, or even totally for the time of the pronouncement. There is always some error and evil encased in the recorded thought. It is up to people to become aware of the evil and learn how to deal with it head on, not avoid it or define it away. The questions I am asking in these are what is the historical and cultural dialogue in the period represented by the Greek Fathers, Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Gregory of Nyssa? What are the good and evil aspects of that dialogue? What implications about their theology can be gleaned from the dialogue between the person and his thought?

The reason for asking these questions is to begin to make suggestions for a solution to the problems created by the Cappadocian view of embodiment. What I am objecting to is the tendency of some traditionalists to inappropriately apply the tradition to the 20th century world. What has happened in the post-Reformation era is that the tradition has been divinized and sanctified without sufficient critical regard for its historical context. Consequently,

both the good and the evil inherent in it have become hallowed. What I will attempt to do is make some suggestions of how to get out of the schizophrenia and to identify what kind of theological method can be gleaned from analyzing history from the perspective of a good and evil polarity.

It should be obvious by this time that I am not being anti-intellectual. I am simply attempting to identify evil as much with thinking as it has been with "the passions". My intent is to show some of the evil aspects of the speculative process, not to imply that the speculative process is in and of itself evil.

It is clear to me that philosophy in its most esoteric forms can lead to solutions of human problems. However, there is a limit. There is a point in the process of knowing that the philosophers need to stop their attempt to describe reality because there is no way to completely describe the object or the experience to be known. Words cannot completely convey what we know. They are only pointers towards knowing. The problem is that some philosophers try to go beyond the limit. For example, a love affair cannot be described completely. If a philosopher tries to describe and analyze a love relationship too much, the relationship is destroyed. No philosopher has been successful at it yet. The reason is that a love relationship needs to be experienced, not described. It becomes destructive, i.e. evil, to describe it too much. Both parties lose the love affair. The describer must make both the love

relationship and the describer's relationship in it, objective. It is true that knowing how love relations work is necessary for being loving, but that knowledge is necessary because people are sinful. How much analysis and description of the relationship is needed is limited to the issues of sin. Therefore when philosophers get to describing God, whom they have not seen, they cannot expect to describe God beyond the limits of how sin relates to God. How can we describe God whom we cannot encompass? God too must be experienced not made an object through philosophical description.

The problem is what is the limit? That limit is undefineable. It varies from time to time and place to place. It depends on many variables. A sensitivity beyond defineable limits is necessary to determine the limit between intellection and over-intellection. The limit is seen when sin emerges from the intellection process.

In my mind it becomes obvious that Christian culture has demonstrated that what we think has power. The enculturation of the Platonic view of God and embodiment amply demonstrates that point. What has happened to produce the evil aspect of this thought is that the thinking about the Gospel has become dissected from the awareness of the Gospel in action. The thinking about the Gospel has not been compared sufficiently with the activity of those who believe the Gospel. In this way, thinking has become schizophrenic with action through unawareness. Thought has power, but "logos alone gives the illusion of power and progress and that raises both

human creativity and sinfulness to a quite different dimension"¹⁹ .
 The eschatological mythos expressed in the community as love,
 must be kept in tension with logos in history. Participation in
 the mythos experience in union with thinking is what our Christ-
 ian Meetings and our Christian lives, lived day by day, are all
 about. Participation is the action of the Gospel, the Wisdom of
 the Gospel.

What I will attempt to do is show how the theologians
 function in the context of theology in history, particularly as
 they relate to human embodiment and the unknowability of God.
 The reason for the analysis is to emphasize the need to become
 aware of how we think affects what we do. It will suggest some
 of the ways to keep theology from becoming oppressive and to point
 out how theology has been oppressive. The purpose will be accomplish-
 ed by emphasizing the relational aspect of theology to God, self,
 others and creation, in the historical context of human events.
 It is an attempt to suggest a way for overcoming the schizophrenia
 between thinking and action.

"The fact that the mind is the funnel through which all experience
 must pass was conceived to involve the superior status of mind
 over experience. But this attempt to raise mind over experience
 has signally failed, because in fact bare mind - the mind before
 or above experience - is a mere abstraction." 20

19 2
 p. 231., BO .

20 2
 p. 223., BO .

HEBREW AND GREEK THOUGHT

Introduction

Since Adolph Harnack's History of Dogma, there has been great interest in the comparison of Greek and Hebrew thought. Thorlief Boman wrote a book on this very subject, in which he used word-usage in the two languages as support for his thesis about the differences between the two thought forms²¹. James Barr wrote a book detailing the fallacies in Boman's arguments on linguistic grounds. He said "that where in Boman's book linguistic evidence has been used in the Greek-Hebrew contrast it has not been adequately-protected against, or indeed has positively presupposed, the idea of a logico-gramatical parallelism. ... To expect a correspondence between grammar and thought-forms is, since the development of scientific methodology, an illusion"²². Barr goes on to point out that it is not individual words but whole sentences which are the sources of real communication²³. The test for the explanation of words is in their context²⁴. Barr goes on to say that there is a need for research into biblical styles of language²⁵. It is peculiar that Boman spends a good part of his book pointing out the thought-forms of the two

²¹
TBo.

²²
p. 43., JBa.

²³
p. 264., JBa.

²⁴
p. 113., JBa.

²⁵
p. 272., JBa.

ways of thinking, and Barr does not comment on these sections but instead he concentrates on the erroneous linguistic arguments. However, Barr's arguments do not completely invalidate Boman's work. Boman's work is very helpful for making some distinctions which help explain my hypothesis.

Greek and Hebrew thought emerged from the historical praxis of their times. In Greece, the myths succumbed to reason because they no longer made sense to intelligent people as definitions of reality. Greece's problems came when Poseidon did not cause the tide anymore; the myths fell and the philosophers filled the void. In Israel, the myth of the people was the story of how they got to where they were through the unfolding of events. Israel's problems arose when the providentially created political order from David's lineage was destroyed. The prophets came to change the old interpretation that Yahweh would be present to the people through the royal line of David. The philosophers were to Greece what the prophets were to Israel. When the Greek Fathers inherited the Christian Gospel born in Israel, they faced the problem of preaching the Good News with a thought form which had never faced the critique of the philosophers. The Fathers needed to translate the Hebraic form into a Greek form without losing the Gospel. They were faced²⁶ with a job of putting together two world views which did not match .

²⁶

Lec. 4-3-75.

Greek Thought

The Greek philosophers were attempting to replace the mythical interpretations of reality which the poets of the past had constructed. The pre-Socratics, Plato, and Aristotle, and others, searched for the first principles which could replace the myths as ways of perceiving reality. They used reflections on the observations of their world as the basis for their thinking. They developed a logical method of argumentation which allowed them to get to the truth. They strove for economy in the number of causes of various phenomena of reality; they wanted consistency, coherence and comprehension in their thought system .

The stimulus for this method of thinking was the contrarationality of the mythical approach to reality. People had made the myths reality rather than allegory. Logos became divorced from mythos. Consequently, the philosophers would want to develop a thought process which would get at what they perceived by observing the world around them. They saw the errors for human behaviour in ascribing the cause of all things to the anthropomorphic gods of the mytho-poets. The error was that some Greeks were caught in thinking the world was run by magic; they did not think they caused their own problems. The magical thinkers thought

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From a conversation with Professor Daniel Stevick.

that all they had to do was say the right thing or perform the correct rite and everything would go their way; they did not see how their relationship with themselves, for instance with their passions, caused their problems. The philosophers realized that people could affect their own behaviour and be ethical; they need not blame their problems on the gods or try to propitiate with them. Because of the ethical motive of the philosophers, like Plato, they were like the prophets of Israel.

Some philosophers saw the gods as projections of human traits into, supposed, divine beings. The gods were too human to be considered divine. Consequently, in order to compensate for this subjective tendency, the philosophers developed an objective view of reality; they reflected on what they saw in their world and applied reason to how they fitted things together. They organized their observations into categories which were based on definitions they spelled out.

28

One of the evil aspects inherent in their thought was elitism.

 28

Remember that I am calling this aspect of Greek thought evil because it leads to oppression of groups of people. It is not a benign neutral simple error.

The old myths contained this element as well. The myths were only about aristocrats and heroes and heroines. There were few myths about common people. The elitist tendency was also present in philosophy as a heavy demand on the intellectual powers of its followers. Because it was a philosophical system which was complex, it meant someone needed to have well developed intellectual powers in order to understand the ideas. Not everyone could understand the philosophers because some people had intellectual limitations. Consequently, some were left out: it could be this intellectual discrimination which accounted for some of the adherence to the mythic religions. For instance, David Knowles claims, "Neo-Platonism is a religion for philosophers only; in its pure state it could only appeal to trained thinkers, and it is perhaps significant that when it aimed at becoming a religion and supported a cause it degenerated into theurgy and daemonology and magic" ²⁹ ³⁰ . Although this tendency was not true for all Greek thought to the same degree, it was true of Middle Platonism to a certain extent.

The problem with elitism was that it valued the philosopher above others. Unconsciously, a status was conveyed on the expert knower which became oppressive to those who were not as capable. The philosopher became valued as more important than the non-philos-

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p. 29., DKn.

³⁰

I wonder if the intellectualizing of Christianity in the Scholastic schools of the Middle Ages stimulated the development of a similar tendency in Christianity.

opher, even if the philosopher said he did not. One bit of evidence of this valuation tendency is seen in the Middle Platonic valuation of the contemplative life as a higher vocation than the practical life. This same kind of valuation is translated into Christian culture along with the other presuppositions of Greek philosophy.

Therefore, the problem is not whether Greek philosophy involves participatory knowledge or simple intellection, but how do the Greeks relate to their attitude about the primacy of 'knowing'. What is the status conveyed on the person who is the knower and what status is conveyed on the person who cannot be as skilled a knower due to limitations by created ability. The advantage of Christianity was that it did not discriminate between classes of citizens as much as Greek society did. By being centered in history and people's witness to Jesus Christ and not on a specific way of knowing, Christianity cut across most social dividing lines, at least in principle. There were still slave and master categories as St. Paul speaks of, but their relationship was different, which can lead us in the 20th century to imply that the categories of slave and master are not created by God but were products of the time. The problem of elitism was brought into the Christian experience through the way value was placed in certain aspects of the created order by the Platonic system .

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In Jungian terms this valuation comes from the feeling function which is the part of human nature which values things and situations as good or bad. This valuing is not usually conscious; people must grow

However, I am not saying the Greek Fathers became elitist. I mean that one of the evils brought into Christian experience through the Gospel being expressed in Platonic terms, was an elitist tendency, albeit only a tendency. The tendency was associated with contemplation and the philosophical reasoning. It is an evil aspect which can emerge when people participate in these two activities. The evil aspect is endemic to the Christian and the Greek philosophical and theological process as much as sin is a part of human life .

One of the major differences between Greek and Hebrew thought is the difference in world view. The way the Greek philosophers viewed human events could account for the way they devalued this world. For the Hebrews, God acted in history, but for the Greeks human events were of secondary importance. The important things went on in the "pleroma of ideas" or above this world; "Human events belonged to the passing realm of this world. For some Greeks they were illusory. But for some, they were of considerable importance. Greeks had great historical and real commemorative celebrations" .

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(cont.) in awareness of their way of valuing. If the valuations are kept as presuppositions, preconsciously, they become lethal because people are not aware of how they are valuing themselves, others and their own experiences. These valuations are a part of what Jung terms irrationality.

32

However, it should be remembered that I consider the evil aspect present in a potential sense. The evil aspect is not acted out by necessity. It should be avoided. Sin is the acting out of the evil aspect.

33

From a conversation with Professor Daniel Stevick.

Consequently, their attitude towards human affairs did not consider the events of this world primary, but, instead, their attitude directed them to things out of this world. This attitude influenced the way they valued this world and was brought into Christian thinking in a preconscious attitude prevailing the thought system ³⁴ .

The danger to the Church and human culture from these evil aspects was not brought into broad cultural awareness until the Age of Enlightenment. Philosophers like Plato and Aristotle had created a metaphysic about human nature which was adequate for their time but was not complete enough to serve for all times. Modern psychologies emerged to counteract some assumptions about sin and sexuality because the Gospel was expressed in terms of that metaphysic. Modern science emerged to point out the evil in using metaphysics to define natural phenomena rather than making empirical observations. The Church used metaphysics to say Galileo was wrong about his claim that the world was round, because his idea was not in the orthodox metaphysic. The modern liberation movements emerged to point out the evil in the valuing of certain vocations, sexes, and sexual practices, classes of people and races. The evil aspects which led to these cultural evils were present preconsciously in the pre-suppositions of Greek philosophy. They did not emerge until late

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It emerged lethally to oppress people because people were unaware of its presence. It is interesting to speculate whether the Greeks' devaluation of human events and emphasis on the transcendence of God, paradoxically did not cause them to develop their political theories and their democratic government.

because they were not stated in the philosophy but they were in its world view which was prerationally included.

It is true the Hebraic Gospel had not faced the critique of the philosophers, but also the Greek philosophy had not experienced the critique of the prophets who pointed out the evils of the society, which came as a result of Israel's attitude towards the world view of her thought. The evils inherent in Greek philosophy were only exposed as they were expressed in the Christian culture .³⁵

Hebrew Thought

The Hebrews reacted differently than the Greeks did to the myths they faced. They conformed the myths to their own purposes. They did not reject the Near Eastern myths altogether but drew out of them the truth they contained. One reason for this difference with the Greeks' reaction was that they were an older culture and they were tribal in origin. Their origins began with a wandering people with their God. It was the reflection on this history which created their primary myth. The other myths of the Book of Genesis were interpretations of how Yahweh acted in creation and how human

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The evils I speak of can only be identified when they occur; they cannot be eradicated. A person can only choose to avoid expressing them or from becoming dominated or possessed by them. It is because these evils occur from mental processes that it is ridiculous to identify 'the soul' as the only aspect of human nature which exhibits the image of God. The evils of the products of the mind are just as problematic for individuals and society as the evils of using the body. The truly daemonic part of the problem is that the evils of the mind are not taken as seriously as the evils of the body.

sin came into the world. They kept this myth of their history alive by interpreting it in light of their present. They found it necessary to be open to change their interpretations of the myth. They believed Yahweh changed his way of acting with them. Yahweh's changing was also due to their sin. Their God was change and movement whereas the Platonic view was a static god.

Israel was led to react against the cults of the Near East which were theriomorphic. They did not see Yahweh in human or animal form, particularly in early history, but as a suzerain of a covenant who expected a response to the covenant in ethical behaviour. It was not until later history that they used anthropomorphic descriptions of Yahweh. Israel transformed the myths of the neighbouring cultures, which were not totally unlike the myths of the poets, in order to tell the story of how Yahweh was with them. They celebrated the recital of this story once a year in their enthronement festivals. The yearly liturgy was a recital of once-for-all events, unlike their neighbours who celebrated yearly a recurring myth.

Israel's myth was an interpretation of history which conveyed a way of living in the world, not a way of describing knowledge of the world. Their God was not disconnected from them nor really seen as removed from the world. Yahweh was seen as decidedly personal, not ambivalently personal as in Plato. The thinkers who wrote Genesis 1 saw the world as good and sin as the problem of people,

not of God. The evil valuation on the created order was not seen in terms of where evil was in space but that people were disobedient to God's commands. Yahweh was seen as in relationship with the creation not detached from it. Yahweh came to his people; they were not responsible to go to him, which is an implication in the transcendent emphasis of Platonic thought.

Israel's historical myth and the changing canon of its scriptures were the work of the thinkers of Israel. There were many stages of development and many thinkers. It is widely accepted that there were the J., E., P., and deuteronomic authors which represent schools of thinkers rather than individuals. The biblical record is the living remains of the summary of the strains in Israel's thought.

The Bible demonstrates that there must have been intelligent reflection on the events of their past in order to have the inspired record we have. A thought form which was common in the Near East was Wisdom. Israel took up this thought form quite early in her history but it only gained prominence after the exile. I will be concerned with Wisdom literature because it is the Hebraic form which is most like Greek philosophy.

"Wise men and wisdom writings had been part of ancient Near Eastern culture, recovered writings now show, since well before 2000 B.C." In the post-exilic period, wisdom theology gained acceptance and was very influential in the formation of the canon of the

Law and the prophets³⁶. Wisdom was seen as influential in the writing of Genesis and Exodus, for example in the Joseph stories³⁷ in Genesis 50³⁸.

"Wisdom literature was neither theological nor philosophical in its original and primary purpose. It was concerned with shrewd observation of the realities and possibilities and limits of life as they affected human decision and behaviour. Its aim was to provide practical instruction in the art of living in the light of those observations³⁸. Later wisdom became accepted as the theological view of Torah. Wisdom was no longer just maxims but became "praised³⁹ and even personified as that through which Yahweh deals with men". Wisdom was transformed into a Torah mysticism. It gave the new way Yahweh was acting with his people, and became the solution of the problem of the loss of the promise of the Davidic line. The whole Torah was read as wisdom. The myth or the canon did not change but the way of looking at it did. But it was brought about by the reflection on history by those who believed that Yahweh was with them still.

The wisdom theology affects the New Testament⁴⁰. "Q" is seen as a wisdom source which was trying to show Jesus as a speaker

³⁶
p. 10-11., HHG.

³⁷
p. 12, 20., HHG.

³⁸
p. 10., HHG.

³⁹
p. 13., HHG.

⁴⁰
p. 28ff., HHG.

Platonic thought breaks up the integration. The principles in
 42
 Hebrew thought were integrated into their theology . The principles must have been conscious to some degree to the thinkers if they were able to organize the history of Israel as is shown in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The theologians simply did not elucidate them as the Greek philosophers did. The rules for them were in the Law and their method was the mysticism of the Torah. The medium was the Hebrew thought method. It was something done, not described. Their thought contained both a method and the way of life, in paradox. Their thought was an image of the action of God with them.

Both Hebrew and Greek thinkers reflected on their own particular milieu. Their conclusions were very different from each other because of their very different world views. However, the same Logos inspired the two very different methods and became Incarnate in order to unite them through His Body the Church.

Forms of Hebrew and Greek Thought

The Greeks and the Hebrews had two different ways of thinking. One of the most characteristic differences in thought form is the way both viewed God and the cosmos. In Hebrew culture the ban on representing God in painting and sculpture prohibited visual manifestations of God, but when they praised God physical or anthropo-

42

p. 313., GVR.

morphic images proliferated. Unlike the god of the Greeks, Yahweh was said to have bodily parts. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth ... and the 'breath' of God was moving over the face of the waters", (Gen. 1: 1-2). In other places Yahweh has nostrils and arms. In Genesis 1: 26f, the Hebrew words for likeness and image "tselem" and "demuth" have a "completely concrete meaning ... Thus it is a theologian, conscious⁴³ of the appearance and likewise of the form of God, who is speaking" . It was this kind of God who brought order out of the primeval chaos and set human beings as masters over it all. God was seen to be a God in relation with the creation and the creature; the creature was seen in relation with created things. The images used to describe God were anthropomorphic and described how things were related. In the prophets, Yahweh was described as a lover of Israel. The images which Israel used unite the partners in the relationship and the action in response to it.

The kind of images the Greeks used in the language of their philosophy were different from the Hebrew images. Plato like many Greeks, used visual images. "Perception is of decisive significance for philosophy, for all our concepts, including that of time, are given through sight. According to this kind of thinking Plato is, therefore, absolutely right when he calls time a moving image of immutable eternity. Principles and symbols in the earliest Greek

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p. 109., TBo.

44

were visually construed" . God was not conceived as moving or becoming. God was static. The Greek thought form used spatial images based on visual observation in contrast to the Hebrew images which were time, historical, and relational images.

The two cultures have two different methods of thinking as well as different ways of imagination. The Greeks use logical thinking and the Hebrews used psychological understanding .

45

"When we think logically we place ourselves objectively and impersonally outside the matter and ask what is the strict truth about it; when we would understand a matter psychologically, we familiarize ourselves with it and through sympathetic pursuit of its development we try to grasp it as a necessity" .

46

It is the sense of objectivity in Platonic thought which becomes the problem in understanding Plato's personal relationship with the knowledge he contemplates, i.e. what he calls God. This problem emerges later in the Church as well. There is no doubt in my mind that prayer is certainly the highest goal of Platonic philosophy and that it is impossible to pray impersonally. The problem is that Plato is ambivalent about the way to express the personal relationship. And the problem arises because he uses a language in his philosophical method which is spatial and not personal. The same problem is taken over into Middle Platonism and Neo-

44
p. 115., TBo.

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The term 'psychological understanding' is not the best one, because it is easily confused with 'psychology', but it is still useful here.

46 p. 193., TBo.

Platonism and from there the ambivalence enters the Church's theology. The ambivalence is never completely eradicated. It is still present in our current dialogues. The most significant evidence to support my claim is provided in the controversy over the Greek influence on Christian theology since Harnack. It is still not widely accepted what errors were brought in by the expression of the Gospel in Platonic thought⁴⁷.

As a consequence of their different thought forms the achievements of the two cultures have been different. "The Greeks have made the greatest achievements in the fields of philosophy and science, ... the Israelites have achieved the most in the field of religion and morals"⁴⁸. The Greeks have also developed the arts, which is consistent with their sensory perceptive view of reality.

All the achievements are reflections of human nature which God created. They all come from the same Creator. A problem arose, however, in the manner we creatures use them and what value we place on these achievements as we use them. The aspects of these achievements which are negatively valued become the source of the evil aspects of the achievements. But notice that this implies that these negative valuations were ascribed by PEOPLE; they were

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I use the phrase 'the expression of the Gospel in Platonic thought' because I refuse to admit there was a synthesis. A synthesis would imply a mixing rather than a creation of a tension between Greek and Hebrew thought forms. It is this tension which I think is real and an accurate description of the dialogue we are inheritors of.

48

p. 196., TBo.

not inherent in "the mind of the creator" who created the potential for the achievements. Therefore, evil is still conceived as originating with people and not created by God.

Conclusion

The first point I have made is about theological reflection which the Greeks and the Hebrews have done for us and which the Church has made us inheritors of. People "see (themselves) faced with orders which can be recognized; but (they) also see (themselves) faced with God's freedom, in the face of which any attempt to think they are wise vanishes. ... Can one then understand (the dialogue between Greek and Hebrew thought) with their varied teachings, other than as parts of a great dialogue in which truth can be opposed to truth?"⁴⁹ The dialogue was between the minds of people in two different cultures and the Logos. The dialogue created two separate cultures displaying both the multiform beauty and the diabolos of human nature. But, it should be remembered that BOTH good and evil were produced and that there are TWO forms of thought in our Christian inheritance which contain BOTH good and evil aspects.

The second point is the language images we use in describing God today. The Greek concept of God as static described an aspect of God for us but the Hebrew image is better, i.e. God is

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p. 312., GVR.

a steadfast God. The relational image makes more sense to us than the visual one does. In fact, the visual image can become troublesome in philosophical descriptions because describing God in visual images implies that God is a visual, empirical entity.

Maybe some people's God is visual but mine is not, nor can I describe God in such terms and be in loving praise with God. For me, to use those Greek terms decreases my relationship with God. It is understandable why the Greeks used these images, i.e. as a reaction to the magical mythos of their day, but since that is not our cultural history we should use another type of imagination. In fact, because our cultural history has over-emphasized the intellectual or logos aspect of the tradition, it is imperative we imagine God in relational terms, so that we avoid the danger of losing the ideas which describe the personal and relational aspects of God. The modern issue about God-talk should be concerned about the language images we use in talking about God rather than the word 'God'. Greek philosophy should be used for philosophy of religion and Hebrew thought for theologies, which guide people's faith experience.

Therefore, stories, allegories, and theological reflection on historical events are the appropriate literary medium for theology about God and human nature. That is as long as people do not
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 confuse the allegories and the other media for reality . The

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The confusion of the allegory for reality is as ancient as Atticus in the 2nd century in his view of the Timaeus. Confusing allegory for reality is also another way of saying that the later centuries made the orthodox view of the 4th century universal truth.

(over)

spatial images create problems which keep people from experiencing the reality pointed to. The problem is that there is always an element of irrationality contained in using these images.

But, then, God's ways are not our ways. Just because we finite creatures cannot see all the Logos of reality through our intellectual constructs, we should not be afraid. Our finitude is a given. It is not evil. We make it evil if we expect we should understand all things. What we need to learn is that there is as much evil in rationality as there is in irrationality. Irrationality is not evil in and of itself. The evil in irrationality comes from the way we live in it. After all, the paradox of the Incarnation is irrational to human reason, but I, at least, do not consider the Incarnation evil. The irrationality of Jesus Christ The Incarnate One is my salvation and the symbol to me of the irrationality of the structure of my own, ever so finite, human nature.

Thirdly, I am saying that Greek philosophy is not evil but that there are evil aspects to the contemplative life, to human thinking and to theological concepts of human nature and God which have not been widely accepted. This statement gets to the heart of my hypothesis.

The expression of the Gospel in Platonic terms brought together many paradoxes and caused much dialogue. "Bohr calls the

(cont) The theology of the 4th century became the reality of God, became seen as the only description of God. The Trinitarian formula became the description of God rather than what it was intended to be, i.e. a way to resolve the controversies of the time. This confusion is another form of idolatry.

unitariness of opposite manifestations of a phenomenon 'compliment-arity'." (Why not paradox?) "In that sense Hebrew and Greek thinking are complementary; the Greeks describe reality as 'being', the Hebrews as 'movement'. Reality is, however, both at the same time; this is logically impossible, and yet it is correct"⁵¹. Reality is in truth a paradox of matter and logos.

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p. 208., TBo.

AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE GREEK FATHERS

The Cultural Milieu of the Greek Fathers

A few remarks about the cultural milieu of the times would be helpful in giving some reasons why the Fathers chose to solve the problem of embodiment as they did. Although the Greek world had developed philosophy and mathematics, there was a significant portion of the culture which believed in the old mythic religions. Even the Middle Platonic schools were having a renewal of the mythic dimension to Plato's Timaeus. Atticus believed the Timaeus was a real description of history, not only an allegory. These religions promoted the worship of goddesses and had prostitution cults.

To criticize the prostitution cults connected to the mythic cults would seem moralistic, if it were not for the part these cults played in the Greek culture which was so destructive to human existence. Connected with the cults were practices like the Dionysian festivals where the king was killed each year in a drunken orgy. Child sacrifice was still common, to mention two heinous practices. The rejection of goddess worship was not simply a matter of moralism against public display of sexual expression. The idolatry and the rituals connected with it produced a consciousness in the Greek culture which was destructive for individuals and for the development of a humane culture, regardless if a person is for or against liberal sexual practices.

It was the place of the negative aspects of the mythos in the culture which had to be transformed. Some way was needed to curb the destructive chaotic tendencies of undifferentiated sexuality and aggression which were culturally dominant. The Christian Gospel came on the scene and offered the possibility for a culture which would allow for an expression of other aspects of human nature which had not been allowed to develop fully. The way that culture was established was by Christians being willing to die for what they believed happened in Jesus Christ. By the time of the 'Peace of the Church' the result was that the chaotic forces which were rampant in the society, were subjected to cultural control. Individuals were freed to use their minds to control their passions because the possessive power of the dominant mythos became broken.

Even though the cultic religions were not as strong during the 2nd to the 4th centuries, as they were in Plato's time ⁵², the period of the Greek Fathers still was dominated by mythos. The logos aspect of the Greek culture had emerged in philosophy but it still was not sufficiently strong to destroy the dominance of the mythos. Consequently, Logos had to emerge as dominant for a time

52

I wonder if it could be said that in the age before Plato, before the city states, the mythos and logos existed in some balanced tension. What could have happened was that mythos ascended to dominance because the city culture of the time could not maintain the old tension and survive. The evil was not in the mythos but in its ascendance to dominance over logos.

in order to give the human community a chance to know stability, linearity, order, individuality, intelligence, ego-consciousness and a semblance of peace through agreement, not brute force. The dominance of the logos occurred in the period after the Peace of the Church. With the chaotic effects of the rampant sexuality and aggression, it is no wonder Plato and others saw the world as having
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no meaning and dominated by these forces .

The Christian Gospel could offer a way to accept the senselessness of the Greek milieu. The Christian community provided a place where they were freed from the domination of the chaotic world. The personal element which was lost when the mythos was dissolved came to them in a God who was Incarnate, making life worth living again, even if it meant death for that new myth. The myth was so powerful because the Logos was Incarnate in Jesus Christ and the mythos was historical, not allegorical.

The Platonic philosophers did not see God as a passionate God. They saw the human passions as a part of the passing world. They could not conceive of a God of passion. The reason for this attitude is suggested by Gregory of Nazianzen:

"Those of them who were most subject to passion deified their passion, or honored them among their gods - anger and blood-thirstiness, lust and drunkenness, and every similar wickedness - and made out of this an ignoble and unjust excuse for their own sins. ... They gave to each of these concepts the name of some god or demon, (shades of Jung) by the authority and private judgement of their error, and set up statues whose costliness is a snare and thought to honor them with blood and the stream of sacrifices, and sometimes even by most shameful frenzies and manslaughter." 54

These practices were sufficiently accepted by the culture in order to remain for a time. To overcome them a passionless God was necessary. Otherwise, both the converts and the non-converts would find it difficult to see the difference between the God of the Christians and the old gods. Especially since many philosophically oriented people were already thinking the old gods were nothing but projections of people's attitudes towards themselves. It would be difficult to juxtapose a passionate God with such a recent history of human gods. Ironically, the way the Cappadocians chose to resolve the problem was a variation on the already exist-
 55
 ing notion of Plato and Parmenides .

The main point the apologists were making was not anything to do with the passions or sexuality. What they were attempting to do was translate into their culture their belief that God had become Incarnate in Jesus Christ. The passions were viewed as they were because the Platonic cultural view was brought into the Christian context. They could not see the long range implications. They
 56
 could not be expected to rise above their cultural questions .

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 p. 146., NAZ.

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 Unfortunately for today, there was also a patriarchal element which encased their thinking.

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 It is not until today with the history of the Christian view having been accepted in history and the threat of the chaotic passions having subsided, that it could be recognized that the body and its passions were also a part of the image of God. Now, it can be recognized that the Incarnation meant embodiment of the image of God in Jesus' emotions and his body as well as his 'soul'. He can be seen as a

Therefore, because the passions needed to be subordinated to the logos in the day of the Fathers, it becomes obvious why the Cappadocian resolutions of the Trinity and the embodiment issue need to be kept in the context of the history of the cultural dialogue.

Middle Platonism

By the second century A.D. in some very influential circles the myths of the past had been replaced by philosophy. As a result there was a real sense of God at work in the Greek culture through philosophers, to prepare the way for the Gospel to be preached and to be heard.

"A revival of true Platonic thought took place shortly before A.D. 100 and issued in a movement known as Middle Platonism. Metaphysics once more became a principal interest, and a specifically religious, or at least deistic, interest, helped to direct attention to the religious element which had always been present in Plato's thought. A feature of this period was a readiness to admit into the philosophical synthesis elements of other schools of thought, particularly from Aristotle and the Neo-Pythagoreans ..." (They were facing new questions because it was a different age from Plato's). "A notable group of thinkers took some of the rich and often undigested and unsystematic mass of Platonic thought and converted it into something that resembled a coherent system and one which was, at least in its theological aspects, more susceptible of a monotheistic interpretation. The most important of these developments was the establishment of a supreme principle (sometimes

(cont.) hypostatic union of body and soul as well as the divine and the human. To have expected the Greek culture to have understood the importance of the body as part of the image of God, is like expecting Jesus to have been both married and unmarried, i.e. to have been married to support a 20th century valuation of marriage and to have been unmarried in order to support the chaste vocation.

called 'god') at the head of the hierarchy of being ... The Supreme Mind, the One, was identified with Aristotle's remote transcendent Mind that kept the universe of being in motion ... All this, to one looking upon it with the main outlines of Christian teaching in his mind, represents a very great advance towards what was to become orthodox natural theology". One of the developments was to bring "the supreme mind to the level of human intelligence and the visible world. Here again the hints and myths of Plato and especially the great myth of the Timaeus, and suggestions in Aristotle's cosmology, were given a firm philosophical base, and a Second Mind and a World-Soul were interposed between the Supreme Mind and the human soul." 57

This philosophy was the one present to the Fathers until Origen.

Albinus

Albinus is a Greek philosopher of the Middle Platonic School who has been identified as the philosophical source for a number of early apologists. His Didaskalikos survives and shows a summary of the teachings of Plato and contains some of the eclectic thinking. Justin was more influenced by him than the New Testament in how he views the relationship between mind, body and spirit . 58 Origen borrowed his concept of the time of eternal creation . 59 Irenaeus and Justin used his "seminal Word of God" concept and the relation of the World-Soul and the cosmos . 60 Clement has been shown to have some correspondence with his doctrine of the ideas as the thoughts of God . 61 Yet Albinus' view of the highest divinity

57
p. 17-19., DKn.

58
Ch1 2-17-75

59
Alb. p. 14 (3).

60
Alb. p. 10 X (2).

61 p. 591., LFr.

is different from the "incomprehensibility of God" of Clement and Philo. This is yet another indicator of how selective the Fathers were of the philosophical ideas they encountered.

One of his major influences was his distinction between the contemplative and practical life. He describes clearly the difference between them; making the contemplative life a higher one. "The principal object of the contemplative life is the knowledge of truth; that of the practical life consists in carry-
 62
 ing out what reason counsels" . This description implies that the contemplative life is a very speculative process, which is certainly an element of his philosophy. However, the further description implies that the contemplative life consists of contem-
 63
 plating divinity, not just intellection or just ethics .

There is a very strong emphasis on ethical behaviour. It is strange how this element was not emphasized more by the apologists who used him. However, the more important thing is that Albinus made the contemplative life higher with a very heavy emphasis on the intellectual expression of the process of contemplation. What happens, then, is when theologians applied this philosophy to the preaching of the Gospel, they drew into the dialogue the distinction between the two lives and the value placed on them as well. The eventual expression of this distinction and valuation became expressed in the cultural attitude towards the contemplative and secular

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Alb. p. 1, II (i).

63

It is striking how much it resembles the later descriptions of the distinction between the contemplative and active lives in religious orders.

vocations in both eastern and western monasticism and mysticism. It also eventually affected the distinction between academic and practical theology.

The distinction between the two lives is built on the attitude towards the world of sensual perception and the world of the mind. Although the contemplative life is in no way what we mean by speculation the problem is that the intellectual aspect can easily become dominant. I have already alluded to the Neo-⁶⁴Platonic tendency to be a religion for the philosophers only . It can be asked what effect the intellectualism had on Origen and Augustine, who were so heavily influenced by Neo-Platonism.

The religious character of the philosophy is quite evident⁶⁵ in Albinus, particularly in the contemplation section , and the⁶⁶ethics section . "As to the most precious value, the sovereign Good, Plato regards it as difficult to find and dangerous to make known to everyone. (Elitist?) If one looks carefully at his works, one sees that he located the good for man in knowledge and in contemplating of the highest Good, which one can also call God or⁶⁷First Intellect" . It becomes obvious he is not talking of ethic-⁶⁸al humanism but a state of ecstasy in the intellectual process .

⁶⁴ On page 40, note 29.

⁶⁵ Alb. II.

⁶⁶ Alb. XXVII.

⁶⁷ Alb. p. 20 (1).

The negative attitude towards the passions was present in Albinus as well. But it seems that he does not emphasize this as negatively as some of the Fathers, particularly Clement of Alexandria⁶⁹. He says, "the philosopher must be of a temperate nature, and master of himself in relation to the passions of the body"⁷⁰. And later, "Since the passible soul and the reasoning soul differ by nature, they are appropriately separated spatially"⁷¹. These statements do not condemn the passions nor people; they are not moral judgements but more like distinctions. The passions are seen as inhibitors but with no hint of association with evil or sin. Gregory of Nyssa seems to be the closest representative of this attitude towards the passions but even he emphasizes the greater value of chastity. Gregory seems to have been influenced by the powerful encratite strain, present from the beginning. The Greeks are not the source of the anti-sexuality of Gregory. It was already present in the Christian tradition.

It was the attitude towards God and the passions which attracted the apologists to the philosophies. I would suspect that the Fathers did not give the long range implications of the intellectual aspects of their theology that much concern, because they were not

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I would want to ask how this kind of contemplation is related to a tradition of contemplation like the Ignatian or the Dominican.

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The tenor of the writing about human nature and behaviour in Clement is negative. Whereas, Albinus conveys a more positive one.

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Alb. p. 1, I (2).

⁷¹

Alb. p. 17, XXIV (2).

intending the statements for all times and all peoples. They were making them for their own times; they believed that their world was moving towards a fast approaching eschaton. They were not intending to build a culture. Human history was not a major concern for them even though they believed God was acting anew in this age, the age of fulfilment. It was not until the later Latin Fathers that the culture builders emerged. Ironically, the foundation they built Christian culture on was the same foundation criticized here, with both its good and its evil aspects. It is not surprising then that both aspects emerged in the culture.

Justin Martyr

Justin tells his own story through his Dialogue with Trypho.

"In his search for wisdom he approached in turn a Stoic, an Aristotelian, a Pythagorean and a Platonist. It was to the Platonist that he finally attached himself before his conversion. When he became a Christian he continued to wear the philosopher's cloak and founded a school at Rome. In his theology of the word, Justin was influenced by the Middle Platonism of Albinus." 72

It is the story of his conversion which provides the most important information about the way he reconciled the Gospel and philosophy. It was his personal history which assisted him to reconcile Greek philosophy with the kerygma and to start the process for the Church.

"His story expresses the reasons which a man of Greek culture could have, around A.D. 130, for becoming a convert to Christianity. For a philosopher to become a convert was to pass from a philosophy quickened by a deeply religious feeling, to a religion capable of a philosophical view of the world." 73

72

p. 44., DCK.

73

p. 11., EGi.

"In the solitude where he had retired in order to meditate, he happened to meet an old man, of venerable appearance, who asked him questions about God, the nature of human souls and their transmigrations from bodies to bodies after death" 74

"When he had spoken these and many other things ... he went away, bidding me attend to them; and I have not seen him since. But straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets and of those men who are friends of Christ possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable. This and for this reason, I am a philosopher. Moreover, I would wish that all, making a resolution similar to my own, do not keep themselves away from the words of the Savior. For they possess a terrible power in themselves, and are sufficient to inspire those who turn aside from the path of rectitude with awe, while the sweetest rest is afforded those who make a diligent practice of them. If, then you have any concern for yourself, and if you are eagerly looking for salvation and if you believe in God, you may become acquainted with the Christ of God, and after being initiated, live a happy life". 75

This story of his conversion points out the elements of the relationship between the historical praxis and theology. It is an example of the theological method I am suggesting. It tells the story of the beginning of the cultural reconciliation between the Gospel and the Greek philosophical world. The reconciliation started within Justin, before his conversion. Then, because of his conversion he began the reconciliation of the Gospel and his culture.

The elements of the theological method in process begin within Justin himself. He was searching for God and a reasonable way of life, not a rational one. He tried many philosophies. He pursued questions about how to live and behave ethically. The old
76
man talked with him , and showed him how illogical his thinking

74

p. 12., EGi.

75

p. 198., JMa.

76

Theology in conversation and conversion.

was. He was prepared for conversion by his own inner desire to search and the conversation about his thought. After his talk, he felt something happen to him, "a flame was kindled in my soul"⁷⁷. His inner "self" was touched by the experience of his thinking. He was led by his conversion to talk with Trypho, a Jew, and to other philosophers⁷⁸. His conversion was both a feeling and an intellectual experience which led to a response. He was convinced, i.e. emotionally attached to his ideas which were expressed in his starting a school, and he attempted to share⁷⁹ his experience in order to (hopefully) convert others. His convictions eventually led to his death⁸⁰. I consider his conversion an example of a complete theological method, i.e. theology in dialogue within a person and with his milieu.

It cannot be said, as Harnack tried to, that Justin was a promoter of Greek philosophy as a substitute for the Gospel. He lived the Gospel even to death, the ultimate witness⁸¹. His writing shows he was not only concerned with philosophical debate. He was a promoter of the eschatological Gospel where he saw salvation in

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p. 198., JMa.

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This indicates that there was still a Jewish aspect to the dialogue in the Greek world of the 2nd century, A.D.

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In Greek 'martyrein' - to witness.

⁸⁰

In Greek 'martyria'.

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It always amazes me how some people can overlook glaring facts like this one, when they make conclusions about contemporary problems while using historical materials.

82

learning the truth, knowledge which saves . He emphasized a way of life which was different in some respects from the philosophies he studied, but not totally different. He connected his ideas about 'the good' with how to attain 'the good' he thought about. He lived a way of life in history. The Gospel was the Good News that God has started his promises in the last days. The eschatological Gospel was a way of life and a medium for a dialogue in history.

83

Justin was the first of the Christian apologists to participate in what I have called the Norris-Patterson Dictum . He identified the 'sole-uncreated' with God. The apologists who followed him were faced with the identification as a problem. Justin undoubtedly did not realize he had created a problem. He also embraced the embodiment problem. He chose Albinus' view of how the passions relate to the contemplative life.

"It is the view that the development of the rational and spiritual element in man's nature - that which he shares with the divine - is impeded by the passions. They arise in him because the irrational and physical element which he shares with the lower animals exerts itself on his rationality. It was in this area that Justin paved the way for a discussion of the acceptability to Christians of views of human nature which curtailed human responsibility for sin. But, unfortunately, he emphasized instead, the disastrous effects of embodiment." 84

The story of Justin's intellectual history shows, "Christianity could appear to some philosophers as the best answer to the questions asked by philosophy. In short, reason was on the side of

82

Ch1. 2-10-75.

83

On page 28.

84

p. 12-13., EHi.

the Christians, not the Philosophers. He had achieved philosoph-
 ical wisdom on the very day he had become a Christian" ⁸⁵. Today
 he remains 'the Patriarch of a spiritual family' for philosophers.
 He had reconciled two worlds because he grew up in one and became
 transformed through his quest by the other. He actually lived in
 the tension between the two. He reconciled them by reconciling
 them in himself. "In a terse sentence of Eusebius of Caesarea:
 'Justin in philosopher's garb, preached the Word of God' " ⁸⁶. He
 was the beginning of the reconciliation of two opposing world views
 and two different ways of perceiving the world. The problem he rais-
 ed was that he made no distinction between the incompatible differ-
 ences in world views and the compatible ways of perceiving the
 world. The contradictions remained mixed and confused.

Irenaeus

Irenaeus was from Asia Minor. He was one of the Greek
 missionaries who evangelized the West. At this time, the Western
 Church was Greek rather than Latin. He joined Pothinus as a
 presbyter. Pothinus had been sent by Polycarp to Celtic Gaul as
 an evangelist at an earlier date. They had been fellow students
 of Polycarp. There arose a Persecution in A.D. 177:

"during which Irenaeus was sent to Rome with letters of remonstrance
 against the rising pestilence of heresy. He found the Montanist
 heresy patronized by Eleutherus the Bishop of Rome; and there
 he met an old friend from the School of Polycarp who had embraced
 the Valentinian heresy. We cannot doubt that it was this visit
 which started his lifelong struggle against the heresies". (Upon
 returning to Lyons he succeeded Pothinus who had met a martyr's

85

p. 12-13., EGi.

86 p. 14.. EGi.

death. Emmissaries of the heresies soon came to Gaul. He decided to study their seductive forms of the Gospel, in order to)... "render it impossible for anyone to confound Gnosticism with Christianity" and to make it impossible for anyone to be both a Gnostic and a Christian. 87

His life was ended in the massacre of A.D. 202, stimulated by Emperor Severus. As with Justin, his writing was done in the tension of his responsibilities in the life of the times. Life and death and the encroachment of heresies were the primary issues rather than the luxury to speculate systematically about the implications of his thought.

The stages he wrote the five books of the Against the Heresies suggests something about his theology. His emphasis in each section is somewhat different. The first two books were written at one time and contain the expositions of the Gnostic doctrines, primarily. The theology contained in them is purely in reaction to the doctrines. Books three and four were a positive statement of his own theology containing allusions to Gnostic doctrine. Book five is a recapitulation of his work, done later, and seemingly realizing he might have made sin a necessity in the way he writes about the infantile analogy in IV 38 in an attempt to not fall into the Gnostic trap of equating sin with embodiment. The emphasis in Book V is on human responsibility for sin, but still leaves some questions.

The most important thing is that his thought is an apology to Gnosticism and to Platonic philosophy. He makes most of his theological assertions in order to attack Gnostic doctrine and affirm

Christian doctrine. Therefore, the conclusions he makes will not deal with all aspects of the issue nor will they necessarily be systematic. In order to understand what he concludes, fully, the theological conclusions need to be kept in the context of their dialogue with Gnosticism.

Consequently, Irenaeus does not answer questions like what are the relations between the three persons of the Trinity. He does not state the relationships in terms of 'ousia' and 'hypostasis' because this was not the issue of his day. He was trying to maintain that God was the Father and Creator of all things and that the Word of God was present from before the beginning, apologizing against a Gnostic stepladder cosmos. "The need to fight Gnosticism invited Irenaeus to stress the unity of the divine person in the Trinity. Through his Word, God has made all things visible and invisible, (I 22,1; II 8,3; II 30,9; III 8,3). His writing provided a theological background for the definitions of the later terms. (IV 20,1; ⁸⁸ IV 28,1; II 25,3)" .

He avoided the philosophical issues like the plague, purposely. In fact, he seemed to go to great pains to avoid any confusion with them. First of all, in Book 2 he seems to go to great lengths to associate the term "un-created" with the Creator and Father of all. This association was not at all true in Platonic thought. He seems to catalogue the terms as though to redefine them. When he

88

p. 562., n. 59., EGi.

speaks of the "sole-begotten" in II 7,2, it is in contrast to the "Father of All". He also uses the term here because the Gnostics use it. There are other places he does use the terms alone, but because he has always associated the terms with Christian terms, previously, they have become redefined into Christian terms. He does not use the terms in the technical sense, nor in ignorance of the issues involved in using them. He does not use the Platonic stepladder world view nor does he have a negative view towards embodiment. He seems to take great pains to point out that he is totally against such a philosophical view.

Secondly, his perception of the philosophical problem inherent in the transcendence of God made him stress God's coming to us. The Cappadocian emphasis is on the total otherness of God. The transcendent way of talking about God in Gregory of Nyssa and others seems to overemphasize the incomprehensibility of God to the point of making him foreign, and not personal. Irenaeus keeps away from the philosophical pitfalls by emphasizing God's acts in mercy and love to us in Jesus Christ and by emphasizing our being loving. God is pictured as personal, not as the impersonal and totally transcendent "One" of Platonic thought. He emphasizes the I-Thou relationship of the revealer, not the I-It relationship of a person seeking the "Good". He is the first to develop the theme that God is incomprehensible, since Philo, but hastens to say that God reveals himself to us in Jesus Christ and that God is knowable.

He seems too deliberate in his arguments to be ignorant of the
⁸⁹
 philosophical issues, consciously .

Irenaeus seems to be aware of the negative aspect of the philosophical enterprise, as I have been emphasizing. He criticizes philosophers for trying to find out why things are as they are, as a substitute for loving. He seems to know about one of the bad reputations of the philosophical schools in Greece.

"It is better that one should have no knowledge whatever of any one reason why a single thing in creation has been made, but should believe in God, and continue in His love, than that puffed up through knowledge of this kind he should fall away from that love which is the life of man; and that he should search after other knowledge except (the knowledge of) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified for us, than that by subtle questions and hairsplitting expressions he should fall into impiety." 90

This sounds rather anti-intellectual, but notice that the admonition is not against all knowing but against knowledge for the sake of knowledge and as a substitute for being loving. He is talking about knowledge which is acquired without remembering the purpose it is being learned for. He points out that there is a limit to what people can know about God and why things are as they are. He is aware of the folly of the search for knowledge which becomes a substitute for love. He quotes St. Paul in 1 Cor. 8: 1, "knowledge puffs up but love builds up".

He is the most extreme of the Fathers in expressing the limits of our ability to know God. In Book 4, he hints at what we

89

III 16, 6; IV 19, 20.

90

II 26, 1.

now call knowledge by analogy. He speaks of earthly things as types of the heavenly. These types still indicate idealistic notions but there is a truth contained in their use. He says, God the Invisible One is made known to us through the prophets through Jesus Christ and creation⁹¹. "It is manifest that the Father is indeed invisible, of whom also the Lord said, 'No man hath seen God at any time'⁹²". He implies that no amount of speculation could pierce beyond the limit of this kind of revelation, if God indeed is unknowable. People are thereby left to the process of learning how to love rather than questioning why things are as they are. Irenaeus seems well aware of the evil aspects of the intellectual enterprise, as I have been mentioning. One of the most striking contrasts between Irenaeus and his followers is his emphasis on love not virtue or the infinite quest. He seems to be more interested to preach the Gospel, even when he is being most apologetic, rather than in expounding philosophical questions. Yet, it is obvious he is both educated and intelligent. Consequently, the Gospel message, i.e. to become the children of God, comes through. Those who are considered by some to be better philosophically trained forget this message in their writings. They seem to emphasize the philosophical issues more than the Gospel. The result is what Irenaeus warned us against, as mentioned above.

⁹¹
IV 19, 20.

⁹²
IV 20, 11.

The greatest tragedy is that Irenaeus not only provided the source of the Cappadocian resolution for the Trinity but he avoided the problem of embodiment which Gregory of Nyssa maintained, i.e. sin associated with the passions, but none seemed to build on his insights.

"Irenaeus opposes the threefold distinction of (human nature) into 'spiritual', 'animal' and 'material'. According to him, man is essentially a living and rational being, (V. 3,2), that is to say, the whole make-up of his soul and body. A soul is not a man, it is a man's soul. On the other hand, since it is (a person's) soul, it is strictly individual and it belongs exclusively to (him). Human nature is seen as indivisible and the soul inseparable from the body which it animates, both shall later on receive the rewards or the punishments which (people) will have deserved in this life." 93

The only problem with this notion is that it tends to have a corporeal aspect. However, he does say that the soul has "perceiving, knowing, and reasoning functions which to him are the 'substance' of the soul". 94

Irenaeus uses the biblical view of human nature, not the philosophical view, the unity of the body, 'psyche' and the spirit. He is reacting against the Gnostic view and the Platonic view. He is very careful to not use the word 'nous' for the mind but uses the broader term 'psyche'. It is translated as 'soul' in the Ante-Nicene text. It could be said that he avoided 'nous' because the Gnostics used it for the mind which was poured into the body at birth.

Irenaeus views human nature as a potential unity from the

93

p. 23., EGi.

94

p. 23., EGi.

outset of his argument. So when he attempts to explain the relation of sin and embodiment he makes an attempt to describe sin in relationship to that unity. He seems to suggest an uncanny resemblance to the Jungian process of individuation, i.e. a person experiences a disunity between the various parts of the psyche which is overcome by integration. Adam's sin is seen as disobedience and⁹⁵ loss of innocence . Human beings are in an infantile state when they are born and grow towards perfection by living in the world. God could have made us perfect but decided not to⁹⁶ . God instead endowed us with the faculty of being able to receive the knowledge⁹⁷ of good and evil . The Old Testament community was the childhood of the race. By the Incarnation, human existence reached its adulthood. Death is seen as a merciful release from the subjection to sin in this life. Perfection is reached "by the commingling and the union of the soul receiving the Spirit of the Father, and the admixture of that fleshly nature which was moulded after the image⁹⁸ of God" .

99

This argument eliminates the identification of sin with

⁹⁵
III 23, 5.

⁹⁶
IV 38.

⁹⁷
IV 39.

⁹⁸
V 6, 1.

⁹⁹

But then maybe as he suggested, we can never know why sin came into human existence. We simply know that people are not good or bad; we know we are both. We can choose to do good or evil. We have been

(over)

embodiment. But, unfortunately it seems to imply that sin was a necessary result of embodiment. He says people have the power to choose against evil, but leaves loose ends of arguments unsystematically related; although he does suggest Augustine's resolution of the problem of sin, i.e. it is the will which controls whether we sin or not. Since Irenaeus provided the background for the resolution of the trinitarian controversy and the problem of embodiment, I ask why did he not 'speak louder' in Alexandria? Why did the infinite quest become so other directed; God became seen as out there? Why were the passions seen as the part of us which kept us away from knowing God? Why did others not build on his foundation rather than the Middle Platonists and the Neo-Platonists? I cannot answer these questions, now, but I would suggest one hypothesis, i.e. Irenaeus did not use Platonic philosophical categories and consequently the Platonic theologians ignored his work. The later Fathers were locked in the Platonic philosophical system, and Irenaeus did not believe the philosophical issues were right, particularly in terms of his positive attitude towards the body and the passions. What we do not know nor will ever know, is what would have happened to our culture if Irenaeus not Alexandria prevailed?

What did Irenaeus resolve? He makes embodiment good and conceives us as able to reject sin. Disobedience is the problem,

(cont.) disobedient. Why sin entered in, only God knows. It is, just, there and we need to cope with it; our task is not to explain it, but to fight it. We are involved in it, yet we are not the only source of it; we are disposed to sin because of our families before us were sinful; they pass their sin to us by their sinning against us.

But the "importance of Clement is not in the few philosophical ideas which can be found scattered throughout his works, but rather, in his deep and remarkably successful elucidation of the relation of philosophy to the Christian Faith. There is only one true philosophy, whose source is 'the philosophy according to the Hebrews' or, in other words, 'the philosophy according to Moses'. Since the Greeks have drawn from it, we ourselves can draw from it under its two forms, Holy Scripture and Greek philosophy¹⁰². Philosophy could help (Christians) in leading (people) to Christ"¹⁰³. I ask why this Christian 'gnosis' did not lead him to stay in Alexandria?

There is an ongoing debate as to whether the Greek philosophy¹⁰⁴ or the Christian elements dominate in Clement. Because of the way Clement deals with knowing God and embodiment, I would say he allows the Greek elements to dominate. His gnosis as a learned philosopher led him away from a philosophy more based on the Gospel, as was Irenaeus'. He even allowed himself to be influenced by Gnostic elements. I am implying his training blinded him.

Clement skirts the 'agenetos' issue by avoiding it¹⁰⁵. Instead, he is the first Christian Father to use Philo's exegesis on Moses. "God is beyond teaching (he is) known by his power alone.

¹⁰² This is an allusion to the tradition that Plato received inspiration from the Hebrews at Alexandria. He, also, saw wisdom having been given to the non-Greeks, the Greeks and the Hebrews through the action of the Logos. p. 51., DCK.

¹⁰³ p. 33., EGi.

¹⁰⁴ p. 34-35., EGi.

God is beyond place or time or any attribute of created things. But this inexplicable and unknowable God is in some sense known by his power or son or logos, who is wisdom and knowledge". 106

This concept sounds very much like Irenaeus', but it lacks the sense of God in his mercy coming to us which Irenaeus conveys. In addition, Clement has ignored Irenaeus' unity of the Godhead and set up the Son of God as intermediary between the 'One' and man. He introduces a kind of chain of being ¹⁰⁷. The result is a very intellectually objective treatment and a misperception of the unity of God. Clement leaves God totally transcendent and foreign to us both in the language he uses and in his attitude towards people.

However, I must admit, he makes it very clear that the response to the Gospel is loving thy neighbour, in his treatise on Christian ethics, the Paidagogos. He uses the term instructor because 'teacher' is seen merely as enlightening the mind, where-¹⁰⁸ as the 'instructor' educates the soul. He relates the Gospel as ethics to the social concerns of his day.

His negative attitude towards people is most destructively expressed in his ambivalent view of embodiment. "In the Paidagogos he sets forth the discipline through which Christ allows the soul

105

p. 46., LGP.

106

I
p. 76., BO .

107

p. 231., SRL.

108

p. 30., EGi.

to curtail the passions which restrain its growth to perfection"¹⁰⁹ .

He adds to the problem by saying that "the admittedly disturbing practice of marriage cannot be abandoned even by Christians seeking the perfection open to them"¹¹⁰ . In these quotes and in other places his thought reflects that he was aware of the Gnostic contention that matter was evil, and that he attempted to avoid it by making creation good. However, he contradicts himself by the way he talks about the passions and marriage. The strange thing to me is that even though he was supposed to have known Irenaeus, he changed Irenaeus' view at three points. "God became man so that man might become divine" was an Irenaeus phrase. Clement changes it so as to emphasize that the achievement of rationality was the result of the curtailment of the passions. He abandoned the 'childhood analogy' and speaks of man in his original state as "a young animal bereft of reason and dominated by the passions"¹¹¹ . Clement says only the soul is the image of God¹¹² .

I ask again why did he, a trained philosopher, disagree with Irenaeus' views? Was it because Irenaeus was not consistent with Clement's philosophical background or with his Christian commitment?

It seems that with Clement the Platonic expression of the tradition was already solidified. It was transferred to the

¹⁰⁹
p. 947., LGP.

¹¹⁰
Misc. VII, 12.

III
Instructor I 5,13; III 12.

¹¹²
p. 48-50., LGP.

to the allegorical meaning, so there is a transition from the common faith to gnosis and there is a progress from the ordinary life to perfection. Spirituality forms the inward dimension of this ladder. But this ladder itself corresponds to reality in the order of being. The basic theme of Origen's mystical thought is the relatedness of man to the Logos who is himself the image of the Father. But sin has obscured this image. The spiritual life consists in restoring it. He must gradually free himself from slavery to his passions which is also subject to devils." 117

From this description it is obvious that his spirituality comes from his philosophy. The movement out of the historical praxis comes directly from Platonism not the Gospel.

His work On Prayer, makes more clear his view on embodiment. 118
 "The body weighs down the soul" . His advice to people is constantly expressed in terms of 'ought' or exhortation.

However, Origen does use the same theology of history as Irenaeus. History is education towards perfection. But, for Origen the direction for human perfection is out of this world towards henosis with a transcendent God. In contrast, Irenaeus is positive towards human life and he speaks of the comingling of the Spirit of God in the resurrected state which had a physical element. Love in the community was Irenaeus' direction; gnosis was Origen's. It 119
 was a kind of aloneness indicative of his own life .

117
 p. 56., DCK.

118
 p. 238., ACh.

119
 Again the context of history and biography makes thought and human behaviour more understandable.

What can be said about Origen's philosophical expression of the Gospel? He makes the Logos subordinate to the Godhead. The contemplative life becomes more important than the practical life. "The distinction between creature and creator is mitigated by the partial but fundamental identity of creature and creator. Gnosis is paramount"¹²⁰. The 'agenetos' problem is exacerbated by his identification of the Son as 'genetos'. The body is not evil but the result of sin of the logikoi which existed before human creation. The body was needed for perfection; but it is not an inherently good aspect of human nature as Genesis suggests. He considers the preoccupation of the 'diastema', this world, is bodily pleasure¹²¹. Man's creatureliness was at bottom bad or evil¹²².

What did Origen do? He provided the Church with the awareness that there is a limit to Greek cultural integration. He mounted the speculative problems and brought them out to the surface. What he said was not in the scriptures, but from his philosophical frame of reference. His exegetical method, even though he attempted to be orthodox, provided an opportunity for him to project his philosophical frame of reference on the scriptural interpretation rather than letting the scriptures speak to him. His thought system

¹²⁰ ¹
p. 478-479., BO .

¹²¹
Chl. 4-7-75.

¹²² ¹
p. 483., BO .

is a good example of the domination of philosophy over the Gospel. His exegetical method allowed him to read into the Gospel the content of philosophy, not read out of it the content of the Gospel. Gregory of Nyssa was more successful at the latter enterprise, but even he had his problems.

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Gregory of Nyssa .

Gregory was the younger brother of Basil, the Great and a friend of Gregory Nazianzus. His formal education was limited. He was not educated in the philosophical schools of Constantinople as Basil, Gregory and Macrina, his sister, were; Basil educated him. Even without the education, he did start his adult life as a teacher of rhetoric.

I cannot resist pointing out that without the formal education, it was Gregory of Nyssa who developed the Cappadocian position to its intellectual height, not the educated philosophers. They even missed some of the philosophical problems. In addition, his writing seems to be less dominated by Platonic thinking. He more

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My criticisms of Gregory have been considered unfair, by Professor Patterson an authority on Gregory of Nyssa. However, I am still not convinced I am totally wrong. Therefore, because I do not have the time to do more research, I am leaving this section without much revision. I am putting this comment, here, to acknowledge that my view of Gregory may be inaccurate. I am not sure whether my view is due to my attempt to prove my point, or to my inaccurate perceptions, or to my difficulty to convey what I mean without biasing the facts. I hope the answer is the latter.

often used biblical terms than philosophical terms, although he is not by any means anti-philosophical, but, instead, quite Neo-Platonic. The biblical language seems to be in better balance with the philosophy. His Platonic thought is more true to the Gospel message and the biblical record than his predecessors, except Irenaeus. His major concern was not his defense of the Trinitarian view of God; his major concern was the mystical relationship he had with the God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Gregory's lifestyle and attitudes towards marriage and virginity seem to have affected his thought on embodiment and the whole process towards redemption. "In the 360's, he turned to religious studies and Christian devotion, perhaps even the monastic life, under the inspiration of Basil"¹²⁴ who had started a community on his family's estate¹²⁵. Yet, he did join that community.¹²⁶ There is even some evidence to say he was married¹²⁷. Although he writes at length, in On Virginity¹²⁸, that marriage was an inhibitor to the contemplative life and thereby not a preferred vocation for a Christian. However, his view on marriage did not cause him to consider embodiment a source of sin. What he did believe was that "sexuality is a main root of man's

¹²⁴
p. 421., EBr, under the entry, "Gregory of Nyssa".

¹²⁵
Ch1. 3-17-75.

¹²⁶
As note 124.

¹²⁷
p. 343ff., "Gregory of Nyssa".

¹²⁸
His view of the contemplative life is a particular variation
(over)

troubles. While not evil in itself, it was provided by God for the propagation of the race when he foresaw that man would fall away from his original angelic nature. When Gregory throughout his work speaks of 'aphtharsia' (incorruptability) he has the overcoming of sexuality, primarily in mind. In considering the ascent of the soul to God, he thinks of the first step as freedom from the passions which sexuality engenders." 129

"He shared Origen's conviction that human material nature is a
130
result of the fall" . From this information it is clear that Gregory was ambivalent in his views about embodiment. He was both positive and negative. His views were a reflection of his attitude towards his own life as he functioned as a person, in his administrative abilities and his choice for the contemplative life, in the way he did.

Gregory became important not only for his writings, but, because he was involved in the politics and decision making of his day. He was a key person at the Council of Constantinople (381 A.D.) which met to resolve the Trinitarian controversy. His theology was created in response to the demands of his responsibilities. He was placed in the diocese of Nyssa by Basil, who was fighting the Arian Bishop, Anthimus of Tyana. He was removed for his administrative incompetence by the efforts of the Arianizing

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(cont.) on the Platonic view of the contemplative life and the active life. I suspect what happened was that Gregory and other Christians saw the way to express what they believed to be true about the encratic lifestyle, in Platonic philosophy.

129

p. 239-240., CLF.

130

As note 124.

Emperor Valens. The removal was both because he was incompetent and as an excuse to get rid of him. After the emperor's death, Gregory returned. Even though Gregory was prone to poor diplomatic abilities, he was made head of the orthodox party which went to Constantinople.

Gregory of Nyssa and the other Cappadocians resolved some issues facing the 4th century and left others for later theologians, i.e. the Norris-Patterson Dictum. The problem is that the unresolved issues became orthodox along with the resolved ones, in later ages.

First of all, what was resolved? The Cappadocians led the orthodox party to resolve the controversy over the relationship between the three persons of the Godhead and at the same time broke the Platonic stepladder from the earth to the Godhead. They established the unity and common nature of the Trinity. They destroyed the Logos as the mediator between God and humanity. God was said to be incomprehensible but the incomprehensibility did not become as much a barrier as an enticement or a part of the strategy of Grace. There was no complete union with God, or satiety, as in Origen. The infinite pursuit became the real vision of God¹³¹. "The doctrine of the infinite pursuit and infinite progress (was) seen as a never completed journey. God (was) both goal and co-partner. (Consequently) The finitude of human

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p. 482., EO .

nature (was) maintained because creaturely finitude (was)
¹³²
 not overcome" . In the resurrection, "the Divine power ...
 does not only restore you that body once dissolved, but makes
 great and splendid additions to it ... it is sown a natural
¹³³
 body; it is raised a spiritual body" .

The Cappadocians' concept of the Trinity was not only
 a description of the Godhead. It was a way to describe how God
 came to us. They were more interested in sin and redemption
 than they were in the nature of God and the doctrine, itself.

There was a direct connection between Gregory of Nyssa's
 view of sin and redemption and his view of embodiment. The nature
 of the Trinity was not important in and of itself, except as it
 related to how God created us and how evil and sin became a part
 of the world. The concern for redemption was, how do we get out
 of that sinful state? His answer was to associate sin with an
 aspect of embodiment, and, like many other Platonists, with the
 passions. The result is, as I mentioned above, an ambivalent attitude
 towards the goodness of embodiment.

His attitude was not wholly Platonic, however. He had
 eliminated the idea of the pre-existent soul. Body and soul were
¹³⁴
 seen as created together . The great difficulty with it "is
 that it makes sin almost impossible. (As with Irenaeus' view).

¹³³

p. 466., GoN.

¹³⁴

p. 388., GoN.

Here, we must bear clearly in mind the fundamentally Greek conception of sin which the Cappadocians fully shared with Socrates and Plato. To them it is unthinkable that anyone can sin in full knowledge of what they are doing". The solution to this problem came with Augustine who made sin a spiritual problem, a decision of the will, not a problem associated with embodiment¹³⁵.

The negative aspect of the ambivalent attitude towards embodiment originates from Gregory's interpretation of Genesis 1: 27, "male and female created He them". He identifies the soul as the only aspect of human creation which displays the image of God. He says,

"We must, then, examine the words carefully: for we find, if we do so that that which was made 'in the image' is one thing, and that which is now manifested in wretchedness is another. 'God created man', it says; 'in the image of God created He him'. There is an end of the creation of that which was made 'in the image': then it makes a resumption of the account of creation, and says, 'male and female created He them'. I presume that every one knows that this is a departure from the Prototype: for 'in Christ Jesus', as the apostle says, 'there is neither male nor female'. Yet the phrase declares that man is thus divided".¹³⁶

In his own words it is clear that Gregory has allowed his philosophy determine that the image of God is not expressed in the differentiation of the sexes. He goes on and says that human nature is between the irrational animal and the rational divine. And later, he separates the good into the intellect and sin to sexuality. It

¹³⁵ 3
p. 110., BO .

¹³⁶
p. 405., GoN in On The Making of Man; XvI, 7.

is this kind of distinction that is the origin of the schizophrenia between good and evil which Jung deplores throughout his works. The problem with the schizophrenia of good and evil is that it identifies one part of our nature as good and another as evil which ignores the potential for good and evil in all parts of our nature. The result is that thought and prayer tend to be seen as good and sexuality tends to be seen as bad. Separating good from evil in that way does not acknowledge the evil present in thought and prayer and the good present in sexuality. In my mind it is unquestionably true that Gregory remains subject to Platonic thought.

Therefore, it seems justified to say that Gregory of Nyssa gave some elements of the encratite tradition orthodox status through Platonic philosophy. "The encratites were groups of early Christians who sometimes carried their ascetical practice and doctrine to extremes. They commonly rejected the use of wine and flesh-meat and often also marriage"¹³⁷. The Cappadocians were attempting to avoid the extreme practices but to keep the discipline, the prayer life and the attitude towards virginity, alive. Through Greek philosophy they found the terms in which to express their tradition as they also found the terms in which to express the Gospel. The negative attitude towards sexuality was given credence by both the encratic tradition and Platonic philosophy. With the aid of philosophy and the fight for orthodoxy, the negative

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From the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, under "Encratites",

attitude towards sexuality became THE accepted view of the Church. The view was brought into orthodoxy along with the Trinitarian orthodox position. The problem this view presents to future generations does not come from the Cappadocians but from the particular way the Church made the Cappadocian view the orthodox position, in later history. The Cappadocians were not attempting to deal with sexuality for an ongoing society but for a society which was waiting for the immediate end of time.

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Augustine of Hippo .

Augustine of Hippo is an important person because he is a transition theologian between the East and West theology and because he has been so revered since Luther. His philosophical frame of reference was Neo-Platonic and the orthodox positions of the Church. He extols Plato as, "so remarkable for his brilliance that he has deservedly outshone all the rest of the pupils of Socrates" .

Augustine accepts the Platonic view of the passions and

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Much could be said about how Augustine relates to all the issues I have raised. However, due to the limitations of time and energy I cannot pursue them in as much depth as I have the Greek Fathers. I am only going to say something about how Augustine related to the sexuality issue of embodiment.

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p. 148., Aug.

the negative aspect of the ambivalent attitude towards sexuality. His choice of leaving the woman he was living with and maintaining a chaste religious life are the best facts to demonstrate his views. He writes about his views relating to sin and redemption: "While the city of earth needs only human generation, the City of heaven demands a spiritual regeneration to escape from the taint of the generative act"¹⁴⁰. That makes it clear that he views the sex act as tainted with sin.

However, he does resolve the problem of how sin is related to embodiment. He recognized in his own experience that it was possible to choose evil as well as good. Sin became a matter of choice rather than, in any way, a necessary part of embodiment like Irenaeus and Gregory of Nyssa implied. Sexual differentiation was no longer seen as the source of sin, but the negative valuation of sex was not removed, as I just described.

His attitude towards the other passions is similar. On the one hand, he allowed the passions to be used; anger can be used to correct a sinner and being sad with a suffering person is compassion¹⁴¹. But on the other hand he, too, considered the passions inferior because they are a part of the body which is¹⁴² on the negative end of the chain of being. It is acceptance

¹⁴⁰
p. 353., Aug.

¹⁴¹
p. 178., Aug.

¹⁴²
p. 105., B & N.

of this kind of negative valuation of bodily existence which gives rise to the repression of the emotions in later times.

The negative valuation of bodily existence becomes heightened in Augustine. The chain of being he introduces makes the negative valuation much more explicit than it was in the Cappadocians. Through the explicit definition in a respected theologian, the tendency towards schizophrenia became more possible for later generations. Good became considered to be up and evil was considered to be down.

The Cappadocian Orthodoxy for the 20th Century

Brooks Otis finds the Cappadocian solution a good one because it saved orthodoxy from the physicalist view of Irenaeus¹⁴³ and the later Irenaeans. Initially, I would want to say that this solution was appropriate for its time because the cultural milieu demanded it. Through the askēsis of the passions, a culture emerged which brought an expression of human experience which was more spiritually centered and less chaotically irrational.

However, if that same solution is used in today's culture, it becomes lethal. The reason is, that today, we are in a culture which has just emerged from a period where human feelings and emotions tended to be repressed. Our cultural milieu is exactly the reverse of the condition present in the 4th century. Therefore, it should be obvious to most people that if Christianity has the same view of human nature today as it had in the 4th century, it

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p. 117., BO .

will be impossible to assist 20th century people to solve their problems in existence. For the Church to allow any group to project the Cappadocian resolutions onto today's world would be an example, par excellence, of the ignorance of the hermeneutic process. Some conservative Christians are attempting to do just this by hauling out the traditional theologies to answer questions on women in the priesthood, homosexuality, Black liberation, women's liberation. What they do not realize is that this theology is 'culturally dependent'. To apply the theology to the 20th century without a hermeneutic is nothing short of daemonic. When all that is said, that does not mean that the askēsis of the passions is not applicable to the 20th century. It is: askēsis is always needed for full human existence. However, counselors should not suggest a person practice askēsis if he is trying to undo the repression of his feelings, and theologians should not use the Cappadocian view of human nature to deal with issues of human sexual and societal oppression.

What makes me livid to the point of inarticulateness and rage is that the problems which would have been created by the physicalist view of Irenaeus would burn to dust in the face of the effect of the human suffering caused by the Christian attitude towards embodiment. The message which came to save people from oppression, turned out to be a source of oppression. We will never know, in this life, whether there will or will not be a physical

resurrection, but the present Churches will live or die according to how they come to grips with the 20th century issues of the theology of human nature. The 4th century is dead, we are alive. God is still with us.

In my mind the God language problem and the issues of human liberation, i.e. racism, the third world, the dispossessed, women and Gay people and the Church and society, have been affected by how the Church has dealt with the orthodox views on God and embodiment. What I do not understand is why many theologians and historians cannot see any connection between the present day problems and the attitudes of the 4th century towards sexuality and the emotions. What amazes me is how Dr. Otis could be so blind to some of the implications of the Cappadocian resolution of the issue of embodiment.

What I constantly ask myself is, how can I deal with such a history without saying the Church and the Cappadocians were the servants of the most perverted, diabolically evil plot against true Christian experience? How can I deal with an historical Church which has brought me a sense of salvation in Jesus Christ but in the same history has sown the seeds for the suffering of many? What I have tried to do is offer my present attempt to reconcile myself with that history, attempting to avoid unfair criticism and blame.

TOWARDS A 20th CENTURY THEOLOGY OF HUMAN NATURE

Introduction

Without realizing it at the time, Reinhold Niebuhr's The Nature and Destiny of Man formed the foundation for my hypothesis. It is uncanny for me to go back and read it, finding what I am trying to say spelled out so clearly. I did not remember consciously that I had learned so much from him. But what I think happened was that my reading the book about six years ago provided the mental frame of reference to be able to understand my own history through my desperate searching and tilled my mind to be ready to understand Genesis 1: 27 as I described in the history of the thesis.

Reinhold Niebuhr wrote:

"In regard to the Western emphasis on the individual, my thesis (is) that individual selfhood is expressed in the self's capacity for self-transcendence and not in its rational capacity for conceptual and analytic procedures. Thus a consistent idealism and a consistent naturalism both obscure the dimension of selfhood, the former by equating the self with universal reason (as in Plato and Hegel) and the latter by reducing the self to an unfree nature not capable of viewing itself and the world from the position transcending the flow of events, causes and consequences." 144

He goes on to say that the Biblical-Hebraic emphasis on selfhood was a unity of self in its body, mind and spirit. This unity is obscured by all forms of dualism, which cut up the self into two

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entities, like Descartes . In my view the valuing of the body and the soul as inferior and superior, were just as effective in destroying the unity and created an incipient dualism, which led to later dualisms, like Descartes. This statement is but another way of expressing my concept of the way schizophrenia, of the Western world, developed.

From the 4th to the 20th Century

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As Reinhold Niebuhr implies in the first chapters of his book , the source of the ontology of human nature is in history, not in idealistic metaphysics. The Cappadocian resolutions of the 4th century set the ontology of human nature in Platonic metaphysics. Augustine did the same and Aquinas used Aristotle.

It is not possible here to trace the whole history of the development of idealistic forms of human nature. However, it is clear that some form of idealistic metaphysics was used to understand and form human nature in culture. The idealistic metaphysical understanding was predominantly Platonic in the beginning and later Aristotelian. Both placed negative valuation on some aspect of human nature which was not Biblical. This valuation is best demonstrated by the consistent connection of the image of God with the 'soul' not the body from Gregory of Nyssa until Luther, particularly because we are male and female. Irenaeus was the only person who was consistent with the Hebraic view of the image of God.

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p. viii., RNi.

146

RNi.

The result was that Greek metaphysics prescribed what human nature was to be, rather than letting human nature, as it was expressed in greater fullness in culture, be the guide. The metaphysical ideal became imposed on the people of culture, becoming more a stricture than a guide. In the early centuries of the Church, it was a support to culture, but somewhere along the way, probably in the medieval period, it became a stricture. The reason it became a stricture was due to the negative valuation of the body, primarily encased in the chain of being from Augustine through the scholastics. Not until the Renaissance and the emergence of humanism did a positive view begin to emerge. The stricture became a stricture, instead of freedom.

Consequently, when people use orthodox theology on the Trinity and human nature from Augustine and his predecessors, they are facing a negative valuation of embodiment, not some universal view of the ontology of human nature revealed by God. The process to achieving orthodox teaching did not eradicate all error and, by virtue of that fact, all evil was not eradicated either. Only the problems of the time were resolved and a basic formulary was established which had universal significance.

When Luther used Augustine, he avoided some of the problem by emphasizing the positive side of the ambivalent view of human nature present in Augustine's writings. Luther was able to see marriage as a vocation as more legitimate for him than the religious life. However, even though the ideas changed towards marriage and

human nature, there is not enough evidence to show that the effect of the negative valuation on human nature was eradicated in this period. It would seem unlikely that the human psyche would adjust so rapidly, since we all know how slowly we change as individuals. The major justification for saying this comes from the fact that the role of women, the place of homosexual behaviour in society and the attitudes towards war were relatively unchanged. It is not until recently that the dehumanizing effects of the Greek metaphysics became apparent. The major effect of the negative valuation was to support the oppression of certain groups of people, however unwittingly or unconsciously. It is this point which is most crucial. It is not the thinkers or the thought which was evil but the effect of the thought on the culture which led to the oppression of people. It is this identification of the effect of the Platonic theology and metaphysics in history which is the rationalization for rejecting the presuppositions of Platonic thought and designating them as evil.

Psychology and Theology

Carl Gustav Jung is the other major source for my hypothesis. He writes throughout his works about the rise of reason to dominance over what he calls irrationality. He uses that term to mean what is irrational to human reason, not what is irrational, chaotic and against the divine Logos. For him irrationality is either good or evil. His view is another way of looking at the

problems Greek metaphysics created.

"On a spiritual plane during the first centuries of our era, the spiritual orientation of the Roman world was compensated by the irruption of Christianity. Naturally, in order to survive, Christianity had to defend itself not only against its enemies but against the excessive pretensions of some of its adherents, including those of the Gnostics. Increasingly, it had to rationalize its doctrines in order to stem the flood of irrationality. This led, over centuries, to that strange marriage of the originally irrational Christian message with human reason, which is so characteristic of the Western mentality." (Irrationality would refer to the idea of foolishness of the Greeks, from Paul). "But, to the degree that reason gradually gained the upper hand, the intellect asserted itself and demanded autonomy. And just as the intellect subjugated the psyche, so also it subjugated Nature and begat on her an age of scientific technology that left less and less room for the natural and irrational man. Thus the foundations were laid for an inner opposition which today threatens the world with chaos. To make the reversal complete, all the powers of the underworld now hide behind reason and intellect, and under the mask of rationalistic ideology a stubborn faith seeks to impose itself by fire and sword, vying with the darkest aspects of a Church militant." 147

The dialogue of the Christian Gospel with philosophy eventually resulted in intellectualism with the repressed irrational aspects of human nature hiding behind the intellect. The passions were a part of the repression. The result was that the intellect was possessed by these forces because they were not a part of the conscious awareness. Jung often refers to this kind of behaviour as possession by one aspect of the psyche.

My contention is that people who did theology became possessed by this kind of intellectualism. It is best exemplified

in the scholastic tendency to define terms excessively. In recent Protestantism, the tendency is seen in the system building of Tillich, Barth, Hegel.

Rationalism led to the isolation of the thinking community from people living in other walks of life. In order to overcome this condition, there needs to be a greater concern for the questions all people are raising about their lives, not just the questions of the intellectual community or the 'great' saints. People are facing issues which are difficult to face without the direction of theological resources. People need to know theologians, so they realize that theology is not just academic and irrelevant. Many intelligent thinking people view academia as useless because they do not see how theology effects their lives. Many of the very well educated people I have talked to about this thesis were excited because I was suggesting focusing on human problems rather than intellectual ones. These people volunteered the attitude that theologians do not deal with human problems. So, the view of theology as only academic is not a view of the uneducated or the anti-intellectual but a view from those who have studied theologians. What better evidence is needed.

Questions of growing in the faith have always been faced academically, but they have been relegated to ascetical theology, primarily, not to the main concern of theology. Ascetical theology was a part of pastoral theology. As Martin Thornton points out,

the pastoral approach was viewed as less legitimate than academic
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 theology , a view strikingly like the Platonic valuation of
 the intellectual life and the practical life.

My question is, why has the theological community not
 been able to answer people's questions of how to live in the 20th
 century as the psychiatrist and the psychologist have? Why has
 the psychiatrist replaced the priest in so many people's minds?
 On a theoretical level, I claim the psychologies have a better
 view of how to assist people to transform their lives than the
 Christian community has, i.e. a more accurate concept of human
 nature without the negative valuations present in the Christian
 concept. In terms of method, the depth psychologies use techniques
 which assist people to overcome the inhibitors in their personalit-
 ies which prevent them from being loving. With the exception of
 the values of prayer and the ministry to people throughout their
 whole lives, the psychologies are more effective than the pastoral
 theologies.

Why was it not the theological community which produced
 this view of human nature and the method to assist people to grow?
 First of all, the Church was so committed to their orthodox posit-
 ions and so insulated from seeing their own sin that they did not
 realize the Church needed to change their interpretation of the
 tradition. The Hebrews learned this lesson through the exile. How

the Christian Church will learn to change their interpretation of history is yet to be seen.

Secondly, the Church was possessed by its intellectualism and its objectivism. "Objectivism is intellectualistic".

Intellectualism, says Mannheim is:

"a mode of thought which either does not see the elements in life and in thought which are based on will, interest, emotion, and 'Weltanschauung' - or, if it does recognize their existence, treats them as though they were equivalent to the intellect and believes that they may be mastered by and subordinated to reason. ... Intellectualism is characterized by a complete separation of theory and practice, of intellect from emotion, and finds emotionally determined thinking intolerable." 149

Shades of Plato!!? It is this kind of intellectualism in theological circles which supports my hypothesis about the evil aspect of Platonism emerging in culture, according to Jung's view.

Towards a Theology of Human Psychology

In my opinion a new theology of human nature needs to be developed which takes into account God, embodiment, sin and redemption. The theology should be done with an empirical method which would bring data to the theologians from people in all walks of life and in all lifestyles who are struggling to become faithful to Jesus Christ, the Christian Gospel, and a Christian community . 150

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p. 5., WWi.

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I am avoiding the use of 'the' Christian community because some people who are Christians cannot accept the whole of the Christian history but are nonetheless capable of living in 'a' Christian community and are capable of growing to be faithful to their Creator.

Or, better yet, let the theologians go to the people and ask
 151
 them what works for them . People who are involved in culture
 are the people who can best say whether something works for them
 or not. And in the process of collecting the information a
 dialogue occurs which is the essence of what I consider to be
 the theological process or method.

This method would be a logical development of the Biography
 152
as Theology of James McClendon . He deals with dead people
 and prominent people, not the average person. Average people are
 faithful too, and are the best representatives of themselves.
 Mr. McClendon assumes, uncritically, that Dag Hammarskjold is a
 'representative of the audience for which present-day American
 153
 theology must be undertaken" . To use only prominent people
 would create a new elitism; to use only dead people would eliminate
 dialogue.

The planning of such research would entail constructing a
 hypothesis of human nature. A danger would be that the research
 would prove its own hypothesis. A counteraction to this would be
 that the theologians would have to listen to people tell them whether

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I am thinking of what Paul says in Romans 8: 1, 15, 16,
 "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ
 Jesus ... When we cry, 'Abba, Father!' It is the Spirit himself bear-
 ing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if child-
 ren, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer
 with him in order that we may also be glorified with him".

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JWM.

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p. 40., JWM.

or not the theology they were taught actually assisted them to become faithful. The growth in the ability to be loving, ethically, or the lack of it would be the indicators of success. It would have to be determined by the researchers whether the lack of ethical development was due to the person's difficulties, to the inhibitors of theological process or greater expectations of growth than humanly possible.

What I could envision is a parish or other Christian group who would decide to organize themselves according to this kind of theological method. They would not be a therapeutic community nor a 'research group' but a living intentional Christian community. They would focus on some aspect of ministry so they would not focus on their own personal growth, alone. The purpose of the group would be Christian ministry like any other Christian group. They would grow as people as they attempt to do a Christian missionary work. The venture could be seen as the 'trial use' concept used for Prayer Book revision put to the task of doing theology. The object of the Christian group involved would be the worship of God and a response to the Gospel message in the activities of the culture, which is a consequence of God's creative power. The Christian community would be its own theology, (a paradox!).

As can be seen the elements of the theological process I have been emphasizing all along are present in this method. The

intellectual aspects of human nature are functioning in concert with the rest of our natures with the intention of creating conviction and ethical action. The theological process is dialogical. One social class or group or vocation is not placed superior to another. The theological method is put to the service of the Christian community rather than being its master. It is an attempt to create a metaphysic out of the dialogue with people rather than idealistically super-imposing a concept on people which is alien to them. The object of the whole enterprise is the worship, praise and adoration of the Almighty God, revealed in Jesus Christ, and the response to the love of God in being loving to those around us. The response is in terms of the cultural good and evil as well as the individual good and evil.

In order to plan and execute such an ambitious project it would take much clear thinking and planning. There would be a need for professional theologians from many specialities working together in order to plan it. They would serve as supervisors, organizers and consultants. It could not be done by one person or by one specialist. There is too much information that needs to be collated in order for it to work with one person. The venture would demand what seems to be emerging in academia, i.e. the need for groups of specialists to work together on an issue.

There seem to be a number of people writing about various aspects of the need for change in the purpose of doing theology.

Martin Thornton in his book, Prayer: A New Encounter¹⁵⁴, says
 "The contemporary theological target changes from propositional
 truth to that which explains, interprets and guides faith-experience"¹⁵⁵.
 Later he acknowledges the split between theory and practice in
 the academic world, and its objectivism¹⁵⁶. He calls for a "sane
 empiricism, even subjectivism, a freedom in drawing from personal
 faith-experience"¹⁵⁷. What I see is that his view demands some
 kind of response other than writing books. Professional theologians
 need to involve themselves in activities outside the academic and
 book writing world where the average person is, in order to protect
 the Church from becoming caught in an irrelevant 20th century theol-
 ogy after 10 years pass.

Gustavo Guiterrz is one of those theologians who is involv-¹⁵⁸
 ed in the world he writes theology for. His Theology of Liberation
 was born out of his struggles with liberation in South America.
 His method of theological reflection and his response to it are
 consistent.

George Benson, a Freudian psychiatrist, has done a theolog-
 ical reflection psychology through a case history of one of his
 patients. He claims "in any age, faith must be validated by the

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 MTh.

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 p. 12., MTh.

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 p. 14, 12., MTh.

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 p. 11., MTh.

¹⁵⁸ GGi.

personal experiences of the believer and not by inherited precepts. However, experience is not enough. Faith that moves and develops (people) rather than just maintains them is validated only by experiences and conclusions that are constantly questioned" ¹⁵⁹ . He emphasizes the growth and development aspects of faith. He is also involved in a ministry of relieving suffering. In his next book he will attempt to demonstrate the Christian origins of Freudian psychology instead of humanism.

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Richard R. Niebuhr has written on Experimental Theology . He focuses on the faithful response of people as indicators of the character of their faith. William Lynch writes about Images of Faith, ¹⁶¹ focusing on the language used in writing theology .

It seems that all these men recognize the intellectualism and objectivism of the past. What they indicate is that there is a whole movement away from faith as intellectual concern to faith which is concerned about becoming faithful. What needs to happen is people like Gustavo Gutterz need to do theology. There is a great need for such theology in the context of our contemporary fights in the Gay movement, and human development. The women's movement, the Black movement and the political spheres already have good theologians who are participating in the movements. What may

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be needed in the long run is a collating of these theologies in some form in order to make the insights of one group available to another and to the whole human race. They are all dealing with the same issue, human liberation. There is a need for a dialogue of the Theology of Liberation.

CONCLUSION

There are three things I have been attempting to point out. First of all, the way people do theology is a result of their personal and cultural historical milieu. It is not simply the personal decisions, the personality or particular events or abilities which effect what theologians conclude. It is the cultural milieu and the cultural group they participate in. Each aspect of the person's life effects the other and at some times one aspect dominates. The person is free to decide but not totally free. They are less free if they are unaware of their cultural, personal or intellectual presuppositions. Secondly, the theological method they use comes out of that personal and cultural context. In essence, the person in the cultural context and their theological method cannot be dissected. They flow from and out of each other. The theology of a person and the method they use are in constant dialogue with each other. The job of a person who is attempting to understand a theologian is to seek to understand the person by using both their writings and how they respond to their total milieu. The student's job is to find out what the full picture of the dialogue is and paint the picture of it, admitting the perspective the student is using. Thirdly, any conclusion about the issues of the day cannot be taken out of the context of the dialogue and be applied directly to another time without some hermeneutic of both times expressed. Theologians and their theology cannot be understood

disconnected from the dialogue of their generation. Ideas only exist in relation to people, not floating around in some universal pleroma, waiting to be taken up by someone. The present is affected by the past and the past has something to say to the present, but any present situation must be understood in the ways it is like and unlike a similar past situation, in order to use the truths of the past.

The Trinitarian controversy provides a context to explain the criteria for achieving some portion of the truth through theological reflection. (i) The people involved in the reflection must be involved in relating to God, themselves, others and the created order in the context of the events of their day in both society and the Church. (ii) When the theological writing they produce is used by other people or by other ages, the historical context in which the theological work was created must be conveyed. The story behind the theology must accompany the philosophical ideas. History must be connected to doctrine to maintain truth. The hermeneutic process is not simply an attempt to justify what the new age does but only to acknowledge that there are new questions and new situations. But, God is still with the world and guiding it with Wisdom.

I conclude from the historical analysis that what is said about God, embodiment, evil and sin, and redemption are all related to each other. If you say something about one topic, it will

affect what is implied about the other three. The links between them are strong enough to suggest that a system of thought could be developed without using an idealistic notion which violates reality. This conclusion comes from the idea that the major issue is not God, alone, but how do we, Children of God, relate to God being the sinners we are and not get caught inside ourselves. I would suspect a careful analysis would prove that these topics could not be dealt with in isolation from each other because they relate intimately to each other.

In respect to philosophy, it is not the process of thinking nor the abstractions made which are the problem. There is good and bad philosophy. In one sense all thinking is philosophical. Metaphysics is not even a problem because there is good and bad metaphysics. The major problem is the way the philosophy is used in expressing the Gospel message. Psychology and some forms of philosophy can be used to express the Gospel, but the purpose of the psychology or the philosophy cannot be allowed to dominate over the essential Gospel message. One way of figuring out whether the psychology or the philosophy are dominating is to observe how the movement which uses these forms lives, ethically. If the Gospel message is subordinated to the thought form, some particular aspect of the Gospel message will be overlooked in their activities, i.e. the worship of God, the love of certain people, the repression of certain behaviours, the emergence of

self-aggrandizing pride, etc. The importance of the thought form is not the abstraction itself but who uses it, who benefits by it, who is hurt by it; in other words it is how the thought is used in dialogue within the cultural praxis.

There is too much that needs to be done and there are not enough well educated people who are intelligent and Christian to be careless with the intellectual resources of the Christian community. We cannot afford the luxury of continuing the kind of philosophizing which is now infamously typified by the question, "how many angels can dance on the head of a pin?"

It is about time theologians and ethicists identified more clearly what the sins of the intellectual process are. They have been dwelling too long on the sins connected to the passions, leaving their own sins, benign and masked by rhetorical camouflage. They have unknowingly attacked people in their weakness, taking the focus away from their own sins. They succeeded in getting the intellect and intellectual pursuits equated with the divine and the elite for too long. There are just as many sins of the mind as there are of the body. And, probably today the intellectual sins are more lethal because they have so long gone unchecked.

One of the evidences of the need for awareness of the good and bad aspects of thinking has occurred to me when I have talked about my thesis to people. Some have accused me of being anti-intellectual or wanting to reduce all theology and reflect-

ion on experience to feelings. The criticism of intellection is seen as rejection of it. In psychological terms it is called the either/or syndrome or the global tendency. It is thought that "you are either all with me, or all against me". It occurs in many human interactions, for example, between parents and children. It happens to people when they are unaware that a polarity is at work. The unawareness causes them to shift from all to nothing, either acceptance or rejection, without realizing there is some kind of response in between the all or nothing. It is very difficult for people to hear criticism without hearing rejection. It is very difficult to hear you are sinful and good at the same time and maybe even in the same act. To become aware of both the good and evil aspects of ourselves and our behaviour, and to live in the tension between ourselves, others, God and creation is what I understand to be the purpose of awareness theology.

My suspicion is that when serious thought and research has been done, the metaphysic of human nature will only be able to be made by using negative statements, except that we are a unity within ourselves and capable of 'henosis' with all things. Our essence will only be expressed adequately in relational historical terms. In the past, philosophers have been much too simplistic about their metaphysics of human nature. We are much too varied and complex to have any ideal version of human nature ascribed to us. It is almost impossible to make statements about human

nature and development which will apply to all people without oppressing some, if the statement is encultured. It is not because we cannot know anything, but because human nature is too pluralistic. The character of human nature makes it impossible to place an individual person in some intellectually defined category. The difference in the metaphysics of human nature of the future will be that the categories will be groupings of behaviour, not groups of individuals or roles. Categories like male, female, husband, wife, child, boss, worker, Black, white, are categories which emerged from a metaphysic which is rapidly being discarded. I suspect in the long run, we will only be able to make apophatic statements about the structure of human nature, as a result of empirical research, (Greek thought), and only relational statements to describe how people function in the activities of the world, (Hebraic thought). I believe the Trinitarian formula was more a projection of human nature, than it was a statement about the divine nature.

There is, at least, one danger for me. I have to keep my own view of the thought about the world from becoming dominant. My job is to let Christ dwell between me and the community, making God, not my system of perceiving, the center of my life. It is a process of awareness of what I am doing because I cannot control God, nor anyone. I must think because I am human. I must not dwell in my mind, alone, because I am more than that. I am

a people and a creature of God in a glorious concert with others
and creation, worshipping God, the One who is, in Jesus Christ.

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